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THE
GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA

A Tragedy

3874
d. 44



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604 **Martin** (Sir Theodore) *The Gladiator of Ravenna, a Tragedy*, translated from the *German* of E. Halm. 1st edition, 8vo, cloth, *Lond.*, 1885
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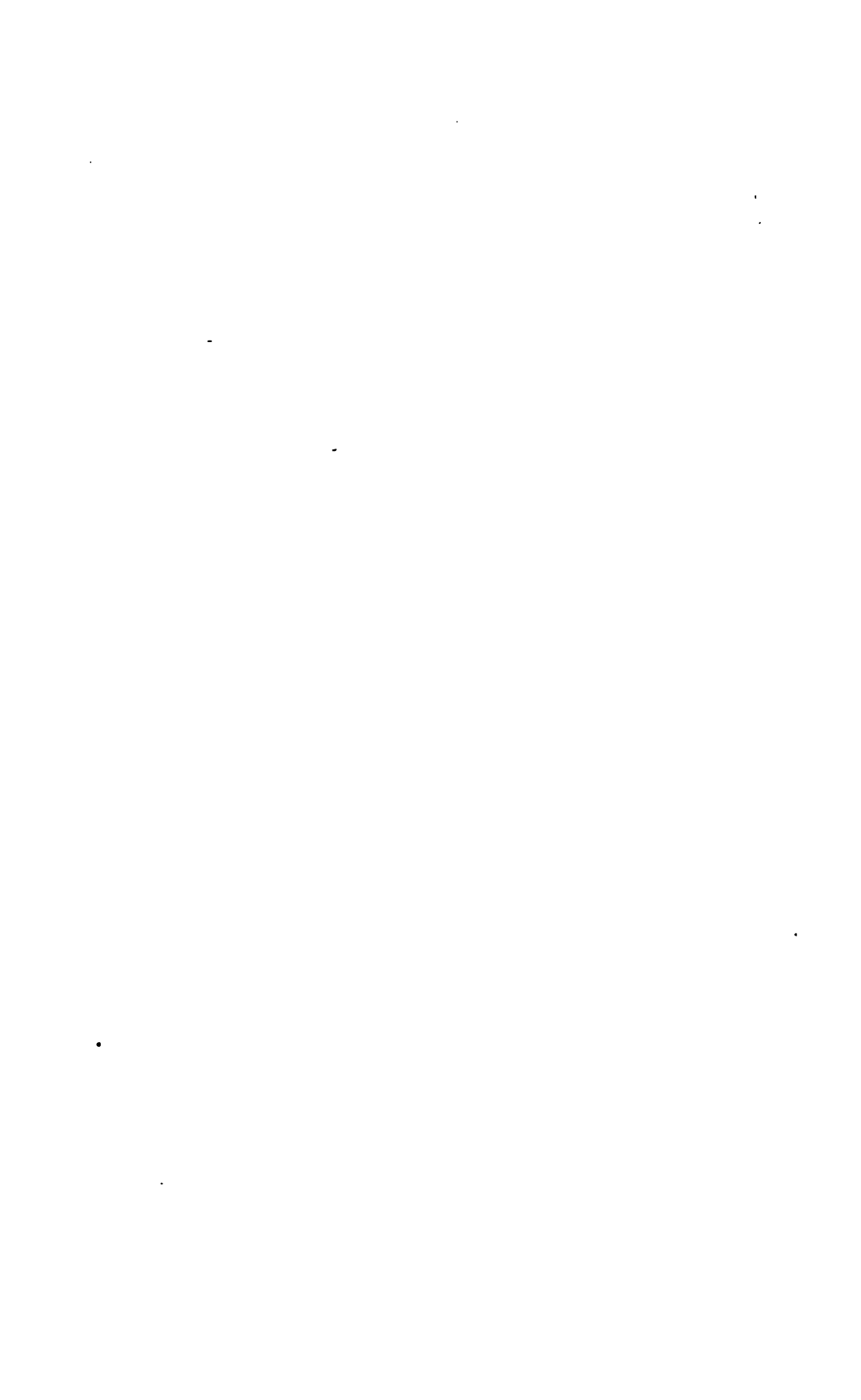
Herbert Maxwell

Rt from Northlake

3874

d.

44



THE
GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA

“ Den menschen macht sein Wille gross und Klein !
Im engen Kreis verengert sich der Sinn ;
Es wächst der Mensch mit seinen grössern Zwecken.”

—SCHILLER

“ 'Tis by our will that we are small or great !
In a contracted sphere the mind contracts ;
Enlarge his aims, the man grows larger too.”

THE
GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA

A Tragedy

BY
FRIEDRICH HALM
(BARON VON MÜNCH BELLINGHAUSEN)

TRANSLATED BY
SIR THEODORE MARTIN, K.C.B.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

1885



P R E F A C E.

THIS play was produced anonymously at the Burg Theater of Vienna, in October 1854. It was then, and for a long time afterwards, ascribed to a certain Dr Laube, when suddenly the authorship was claimed by a Bavarian schoolmaster, named Friedrich Bacherl, who alleged that in the play, which was then creating a *furor* throughout Southern Germany, he recognised the substance of a drama which he had some years before submitted to the director of the Burg Theater, and which had been returned by that gentleman as unfit for the stage. Great was the ferment which ensued, and in Munich the production of the piece led to something as like an O.P. riot as, under the limitations of Bavarian liberty, was possible. The controversy appears to have ended, as others of the same kind have ended, in the claims of both Laube and Bacherl breaking down; for in 1856 the play took its place, without one word of comment, in the collected edition of Friedrich Halm's works. It certainly has a sufficient family

resemblance to its companions to establish Halm as its author.

The story of the play has evidently been suggested by two sentences of Tacitus. In his mention of the first defeat inflicted upon the army of Arminius by Germanicus, when he entered Germany to avenge the signal overthrow of Varus in the Teutoburger Forest by the great German leader, that brilliant word-painter records that, among the prisoners then taken,—

“Inerant feminae nobiles ; inter quas uxor Arminii, eademque filia Segestis, mariti magis quam parentis animo, neque victa in lacrimas, neque voce supplex, compressis inter sinum manibus, gravidum uterum intuens.”—*Ann.*, i. 57.

Arminius's wife, whose name was Thusnelda, soon after being taken to Rome to swell the triumph of Germanicus, gave birth to a son, who, according to Strabo, was called Thumelicus, and of him Tacitus says, “educatus Ravennæ puer, quo mox ludibrio confectatus sit, in tempore memorabo.” The lost books of the ‘Annals’ no doubt contained the fulfilment of the promise here given, but of this son nothing further is known historically. Enough, however, is suggested in the words just quoted for the purposes of the dramatist, who, availing himself of the facts that a woman of the character indicated, the wife of the great German hero, gave birth in captivity to a son, and that this son was trained as a gladiator at the school of Ravenna, and actually made his appearance in the arena, has constructed a play full of life, and action, and interest.

Suetonius has supplied the author with the crude

materials for his masterly portraiture of Caligula. The indications furnished by Suetonius as to the characters of Cæsonia, Cassius Chærea, and others of the personages who figure in the play, have also been turned to account with great dramatic skill.

Appealing to national sentiment so strongly as it does, it would have been strange had this play failed to meet with an enthusiastic reception on its first production. But its success could not have been assured, had it not fallen into the hands of performers able to sustain the many strongly drawn characters, each of whom forms a distinctive feature in the play. Fortunately for the author, his utmost desires on this point seem to have been gratified. Vienna was at that period happy in the possession of a great actress — Julia Rettich. On her the part of Thusnelda devolved, a part demanding not only a noble and commanding presence and deportment, and a voice at once tender and resonant, capable of doing justice to the noble blank verse which is put into Thusnelda's mouth, but also the fine sensibility and strongly sympathetic imagination which could assimilate the feelings and give forth the language of the poet with the spontaneous energy of a fresh inspiration. How complete was her success may be divined from the fact that the play was dedicated to Madame Rettich by the author, "in respectful homage," and that he prefixed to it the following sonnet — a tribute no less honourable to himself than to her, in the frank avowal which it makes, that his creation was ennobled in her hands :—

TO JULIA RETTICH.

" Aims that are noble fate doth still befriend ;
Even as, when mazed in trackless wilds and drear,
The traveller sees some friendly soul appear,
Comfort and help at sorest need to lend.
So I beheld thee on my path descend,
Nurse my first shoots of song, and when in fear
I gave them to the crowd, thou didst ensphere
My dream in form, and with thy being blend.
I gave the words ; thou didst with life complete,
With grace's witchery, and the glow of truth ;
And as I lay in homage at thy feet
My work, great Artist, 'tis my thought that then
I pay no votive tribute, but in sooth
Give only back thy gift to thee again."

Of the many plays written by the Baron von Münch Bellinghausen—the real name of Friedrich Halm—this is the best. Next to it may be ranked his "Sohn der Wildniss," which, under the name of "Ingomar," has been for many years a favourite on the English stage, in a translation which, unfortunately, preserves little of the poetic charm of the original.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CAIUS CÆSAR CALIGULA.

CÆSONIA, his wife.

CASSIUS CHÆREA, Prefect } of the Prætorian Guard.

CORNELIUS SABINUS, Tribune }

CAIUS PISO, } Senators.

TITUS MARCIUS, }

FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, } Roman Knights.

GALLUS, }

VALERIUS, }

THUSNELDA, } prisoners in Rome.

RAMIS, her kinswoman, }

MEROVIG.

GLABRIO, head of the School of Gladiators at Ravenna.

LYCISCA, a flower-girl, his daughter.

THUMELICUS, }

KEYX, }

GNIPHO, } Gladiators.

APEX, }

CÆLIUS, gate-keeper.

Senators, Roman Knights, Freedmen, Gladiators, Slaves,
Female Slaves, Guards.

SCENE—*Rome.*

THE GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA.

ACT I.

Hall in the gardens of Marc Antony. Arcades in the background; through the central arcade, over which a curtain is suspended, the garden is seen; doors right and left. In the walls of the hall, niches with statues on high pedestals, on the steps of which, as well as under the arcades, a number of gladiators are disposed in picturesque groups. On the pedestal of the foremost statue, R., THUMELICUS—on that of the foremost statue, L., KËYX, APEX, and GNIPHO.

Enter CÆLIUS and GLABRIO (L.H.)

CÆL. I tell you, it can't be.

GLAB. Best, have a care!

I am Glabrio, look you,—Glabrio, the head
Of the Ravenna Gladiator-school.
And Caius Cæsar sent me his command
To bring my troop, the picked ones of the lot,
To Rome, for the great fight comes off to-morrow;
So I have brought them, as I used to do,
Here to the gardens of Marc Antony,
Where they may be well cared for and well fed.
And now you come and tell me, "It can't be!"
I tell you, I won't stand it!

CÆL. Hark awhile !
It can't be *here*, here in the left wing. This
Is used as the State prison ; that is why
The right wing's been got ready for your use.
Here, should there be occasion, we'll arrange
A quiet spot for you.

GLAB. Indeed ! indeed !
In the right wing ! It seems I've lost my way !
And this wing here, you say—Now, by my troth,
A queer State prison ! Open doors all round,
And sentries nowhere !—Is it empty, then ?

CÆL. (*pointing to the right*). In there two German women
have been living
This many a year, not under strict restraint ;
They're free to stir about indoors, or in
The gardens, unattended, as they please ;
And so you comprehend—

GLAB. Ay, ay, all right !
My lads and I must to the other side !

CÆL. Where are they ?
GLAB. Yonder, under the arcades ;
And on the steps there, stretching their tired limbs,
Just anywhere and anyhow they can.
And look, what limbs they are—

(*Giving GNIPHO a kick where he lies.*)

Up, Gnipho, up !
Stretch out your arm ! There's sinew for you, look !
And what a chest !—(*striking it with the palm of his hand.*)
All sound, rings like a bell !

A splendid pair these, he and Këyx here,—
Oh, he's a second Hercules, in fact
King of my troop, that soars above the rest
As your hawk soars above a flight of crows.

THUMELICUS (*springing up, and muttering to himself*). Lie,
lie away until you choke yourself !

GLAB. And yonder lad. Come here, Thumelicus !
Just look at this young fellow. Ain't he now
A clipper ? Two-and-twenty years of age,

Handsome as Phœbus, fresh as any rose!
 Won't he set all the women in a flutter,
 Won't there be making eyes and catching breath,
 When he appears on the arena!

KĒYX (*aside*). Pimp!

GLAB. What say you? Have I not for Cæsar reared
 A batch of stalwart springalds?

CÆL. That you have!
 Quite first-rate goods! But now come in with me,
 And to the Tribune show yourself, that he
 May tell the Cæsar you've arrived.

GLAB. All right!
 But first, before I have to trot them out,
 Let my lads have their breakfast and a bath!

CÆL. Ay, ay, it shall be seen to!

(*Exeunt GLABRIO and CÆLIUS (L.)
 through the principal entrance.*)

THUMELICUS (*advancing*). Grant me patience,
 Ye gods, or make me mad! King! he the king
 Of all our company!—It makes me laugh!
 King Kēyx! King. Ho, Gnipho!

GNIPHO. What's up now?

THUM. You're a great chum of his?

GNIPHO. Of who's?

THUM. Of Kēyx;

Kēyx, our king! Ask him from me, will you,
 If from King Midas he can claim descent?

KĒYX (*rising, while APEX also rises*). What do you mean
 by that? A quarrel, eh?

THUM. I do, thou humbug Hercules! Thou King
 Of Nothing and of Nowhere!

GNIPHO. You are mad!

APEX (*who has stolen round to the right of THUMELICUS*).

Give it him hot and heavy as you can!

THUM. I do, you night-owl! You a hawk, forsooth!
 Yes; I mean business!

KĒYX. Seek it somewhere else!

I have no time to trounce such trash as you!

THUM. (*seizing him, while the gladiators in the background start up, and advance*). By all the gods, you scoundrel—

GNIPHO (*holding THUMELICUS back, and tearing him away*).
Back, I say!

Bethink yourselves! Be rational! No blows!

KËYX. Yes, take him off, and get a doctor for him!

Poor devil, he has gone clean off his head,
Ever since Glabrio called him a fresh rose,
And since that worthy parent's worthy child,
Lycisca, off and on at leisure times,
Fondles and plays the wanton in his arms!

THUM. Envy, all envy! You don't fare so well!

GNIPHO (*trying to pull him away*). Come, come, don't be
a fool!

KËYX. Not fare so well?

Why, she has kissed me too, you simpleton,
Ay, many a time! Whom has she not kissed? Pooh!

THUM. (*breaking away, and rushing at him*). Dog, cur, you
lie! (*strikes him.*)

KËYX (*returning the blow*). So ho! You want a beating?
Well, take it then!

GNIPHO (*interposing*). No, no, you shan't. Hands off!

APEX (*coming to THUMELICUS'S assistance*). Pitch into him!
I'm game to help you.

(*Confusion; some of the gladiators
stand off, others mix in the fray.*)

(*During the last few sentences GLABRIO has come in at the
back (L.) He lays about him upon the combatants with a
whip.*)

GLAB. Fire and fury!

Stand back, knaves! You have gone too long without
A taste of my stout whip! Hands off, I say,
You ill-conditioned louts! Do you suppose,
I've crammed you to the throat with mutton, groats,
And barley scones, that you may drub your hides
All in the way of pastime for yourselves?
The Circus is the market you are meant for,
Ay, there, and nowhere else! Bear that in mind,

And now be off to the right wing, ye knaves!

Away with you! Begone!

*(The gladiators, all but KĒYX and THUMELICUS,
retire up slowly, and exount L.)*

Do you hear, KĒYX? *(striking him.)*

KĒYX.

Ay,

You strike me, but this fellow, who began

The fray, goes off scot-free! Well, he shall pay for't!

Fresh Rose, to our next meeting in the Circus!

(Retires up, and exit L.)

THUM. *(springing after him).* The Circus! yes, you insolent
braggart—

GLAB. *(seizing him by the hand and coming forward with him).*

Stay!

Stir not an inch! What was it all about?

Why, son of mine, you're quite upset?

THUM.

If you

Have ever truly cared about me, now,

Now is the time to show it; let me meet

This KĒYX front to front in the next match!

GLAB. H'm! KĒYX! Why, the knave has seen blood flow,
He's bold and sturdy, master of his weapon!

THUM. A Hercules, no doubt. Soars o'er us all
As a hawk soars above a flight of crows.

King of our troop? It may be that he is,

But if he is, I shall not live, not I!

GLAB. Tush, madcap! What a fuss about mere words?

Is not a merchant bound to praise his wares?

You fight as well, as true to rule, as he,

And, if he's stronger, you are more adroit!

So hug your own deserts, and grant him his!

THUM. He spoke ill of Lycisca, and shall die!

GLAB. Spoke ill of her? Why, man, this only shows,
She doesn't care for him! Don't vex yourself

About such silly trash! And, by the by,

Lycisca follows us.

THUM.

To Rome? Lycisca?

GLAB. She's off with Marcus Bibius—you know—

Her friend that was, and now to Rome she comes
To push her fortune.

THUM. Push her fortune? How?
What do you call her fortune?

GLAB. Look you now,
One cannot live on nosegays and on wreaths!
Are you not Caesar's, soul and body, bound
To peril both to serve his merest whim?
That's her case too! Who wants to live must serve!
That's how the world wags!

THUM. Këyx then has cause
For what he said about her, and her charms
Are only wares to sell, and I—

GLAB. Good lack,
You'd like to have them to yourself for nothing!
A pretty business truly. A fine woman
Is like the sunshine, everybody's boon,
Yet out of which each gets a pleasant snack!
Now must I to the palace to report
Myself; but you—or we'll have brawls again—
You must not join the others over there;
I'll give you up the little chamber here,
For which I bargained for my private use.
(*Pointing to a side-door, L.*)

'Tis there, my beauty! Now compose yourself,
And try to rest, until your bath is ready,
And when Lycisca comes, I'll send her here!
Now, will that suit you? Only do not fret,
For fretting makes you pale and haggard! Go,
Go sleep, my beauty!

(*While speaking, he has led THUMELICUS to the
door, L.; after he has disappeared.*)

What a rogue it is!
Must play the jealous fool! What silly stuff!

(*Exit up the stage, L.; after a pause
a side-door, R., opens.*)

Enter RAMIS.

RAM. The tumult has calmed down ! They are all gone !
Why linger ? Come, Thusnelda ! Let the breath
Of the spring breeze expand thy weary breast ;
The fresh May green will cheer and give thee strength !

Enter THUSNELDA.

Thou answerest not, and pain and grief, methinks,
Lie heavier on thy soul than e'er before.
Speak, dearest, speak ! What ails thee ? Speak !

THUSN.

'Tis nought !

For what are wild, and wandering, idle thoughts,
Anger that cannot strike, despairing prayers,
And hate and love that cannot find a vent—
What are they more than that ? A world of woe,
And yet but nothingness, blank nothingness !

RAM. Enough, Thusnelda ! Come into the air,
And from thy suffering turn thine eyes away !

THUSN. And whither turn them, that they may not light
On what has cursed and agonised my life,—
Not light on Rome, Rome everywhere ? Shall I
Look forward ? To a grave in Roman earth ?
Or shall I rivet them upon these walls,
Wherein Rome builds for me a living tomb ?
If back I look, is it not Rome, still Rome,
I see envenoming my girlhood's years ?
Was it not Rome, with glozing crafty words,
Upon my aged father worked so long,
Till he, Segestes, the free German prince,
False to his people, heedless of my prayers,
Became the Roman general's serf and spy ?
And when Arminius, Germany's noblest son,
Sued for my hand, Segestes spurned his suit,
Spurned with harsh terms Rome's dread antagonist ;
And when beneath the cloud of night I fled
On a swift steed with him my heart had chosen,

Was it not Rome, yes, Rome, revengeful Rome,
That from my father's livid lips drew forth
The curse, that, like a ceaseless thunder-peal,
After long years still vibrates through my heart?

RAM. Heavy have been thy sorrows, but not less
The power to bear them nobly and in silence!
Be this thy comfort! By the bitter pangs
Of yearlong slavery tried, thou hast displayed
A spirit greater than thy fate; yea, thou
Hast proved thee worthy of thy race, thyself,
And thy great spouse Arminius.

THUSN. Woe is me!
Dost mock me, woman? Or dost thou not feel
What thou extollest is my shame, and that
Arminius' wife, made captive by the foe,
Should of her triumph have despoiled proud Rome,
Have hurled her scorn on Rome's omnipotence,
And cheated her by dying? And I wished
To die, and would! With proud exultant step
And head erect, I faced Germanicus;
I was already thinking, how I might
Snatch from some Roman satellite the sword
Should set me free in death, when suddenly
I felt a something stir beneath my heart,
And the first warning of a life to be
Thrilled me with secret rapture through and through.
The mother's heart was born within me then,
And with its first pulsation came a voice
That whispered "Live and love!" Then my head drooped,
My resolution fled, and to the chains
Without a word I rendered up my hands.

RAM. How? You repent you could not with your own
Destroy a second unborn life—

THUSN. And why,
Why could I not? For what did I refrain,
Save to give Rome a firmer hold on me?
To give her power, by threatening my boy's life,

To make me follow on the car that bore
 Germanicus in triumph through her streets ?
 For what did I refrain, save that they might
 Tear my child from me, o'er me hold the threat
 To slay him limb by limb, if ever I
 Should venture to lay hands upon myself ?
 Oh foolish pity, thus to spare my son
 For grief and shame and Rome's insulting jests !
 Oh nature's voice, that flattered to deceive,
 Luring me on to live, when life's best crown,
 Freedom and fame, were to be found in death !

RAM. And yet, if it were true what thy heart's voice
 Spoke to thee then ? If all more gloriously,
 For being long delayed, the bliss should bloom,
 Which to thy blind despair seemed lost for ever,
 Thusnelda, if thou wert to hope—

THUSN. To hope ?

I hope for nothing !

RAM. While there's life, there's hope ;
 And thou—thou livest still, and soon wilt feel
 With an intensity ne'er felt before,
 What life is and pure joy ! Needs it that I
 Speak out my thought more plainly ! Oh, rejoice,
 The time is come, deliverance near at hand !

THUSN. Deliverance ?

RAM. This morning—you were still
 Tossing and moaning in your fevered dreams—
 The porter had unbarred the grated door,
 And I stole out to cool my burning brow ;
 And walking through the shrubs beneath the wall
 Which leads to the Prætorians' Hall along,
 A stone fell suddenly before my feet !
 I took this for some boyish frolic, but
 Behold a second, then a third ! I stopped.
 In the fresh sinewy accents of our speech,
 In the full tones that in our forests ring,
 These rhyming words came slowly on my ear :—

*" You that lie imprisoned here,
Know, deliverance is near !
In the noontide's sultry blaze,
When sleep upon the sentries weighs,
From the wall I drop, so then
Hither, hither, come again ! "*

It ceased, and I heard footsteps stealing off !
Back to the house I reeled in ecstasy,
To share with thee my rapture ! But I found thee
Silent, thine anger turned against thyself,
And, fearing to increase thy torturing doubts, said nothing.
But now 'tis near high noon, the time at hand !
Now follow me, come out, to meet high fortune,
The tidings of release Arminius sends.

THUSN. Arminius is dead !

RAM. The Romans said so !

The wish was father to the words !

THUSN.

He's dead ;

Were I no widow, I had not been here.

RAM. Wherefore drop poison into each glad hour,
And wormwood into every joyful word ?

Come, come, Thusnelda ! Not go with me ?

THUSN.

No !

RAM. Well then, I go alone. Wait for me here,
And I on my return into thy lap
Shall pour the ripe fruit of assured joy.

(Exit up R.)

THUSN. So oft deceived, and yet so prone to trust,
So worn with suffering, yet so full of hope !
Shall I despise her mood, or envy it ?
And if perchance she should be right ? No, no !
The gods are strangers to Thusnelda now !
For if they knew of her, if they looked down
Into her mother-heart, reft of her child,
Her only child, by fraud and ruthless force,
Both parted, yet both knit together by
One threat of death held over both their heads,

And could they see how, lonely and forlorn,
 I curse each day that comes, and yet live on,
 Scorn myself daily that I live, yet daily
 Go on accumulating scorn on scorn,
 Oh, if they saw me from their cloudy home,
 They could not choose but weep, weep scalding tears,
 There though enthroned above the dust of earth,
 Divine and inaccessible to pain !
 But no, they see it not ; they turn in wrath
 Their radiant gaze from the base heart, preferred
 Disgraceful slavery to eternal fame ;
 The gods take of Thusnelda heed no more !

RAM. (*rushing in from the principal entrance, R.*) 'Tis he !

He comes, Thusnelda !

THUSN.

How ! He comes ?

Whom mean'st thou ? Speak—

RAM.

Oh brightest day, that e'er

With golden radiance kissed the dusky earth !

'Tis he ! He follows me—

THUSN.

Who follows thee ? Speak ! speak !

RAM. Here, look thyself !

THUSN. (*seeing MEROVIG, who meanwhile has entered at the back, R.*) How ? Do my eyes deceive me ?

'Tis thou ! Oh, Merovig, the tears that course

Each other down thy aged beard proclaim,

'Tis thou indeed !

MER. (*kneeling*). My princess !

THUSN.

Do not weep !

The gods have willed it, that we thus should meet,
 And power abides with them ! Rise up, my friend,
 And now, before of lesser things you speak,

Tell me one thing. How died Arminius ?

MER. Thou know'st, then—

RAM.

How ! It was not all a lie,

Trick, and deception, then ?

THUSN.

Hush ! No complaints !

I mourned for him, while you still cherished hope ;

I mourn no longer now, I envy him !

How died my dear one? Tell me!

MER.

How he died?

I cannot bear to speak—

THUSN.

Say on, say on!

MER. Learn then, since so thou wilt! Germanicus,
Soon after he had made thee prisoner,
Was summoned back to Rome. Arminius then,
That he might set thee free, and punish Rome,
Resolved to force his way to Italy.
Sure of the tribes that dwell upon the Rhine,
The Ems, and Weser, he essayed to make
Pact with Marbod, the Marcomanni's King,
So from the Rhine and Danube in one mass
Might our vast Germany sweep to the South!
But Marbod, proudly trusting his own strength,
And who long since had in Arminius seen
A dreaded rival for Germania's throne,
Rejects the proffered league! Hard words ensue,
The anger of the chiefs infects their people,
And through the land rings menace, clash of arms!

THUSN. Then strife ensued? And jealousy again,
And care for petty selfish ends, divided
The German people in the very face
Of their one common foe? Fools thus to lose
By such disunion all their vital force,
When, hand and will united, they might be
The lords invincible of all the world!

MER. 'Twas even as thou hast said; nay, it was worse!
Warfare ensued, and Marbod vanquished threw
Himself into Rome's arms, that promised him
Protection, which was servitude in fact;
Thereon around Arminius rallied straight
All that was left of Marbod's kingdom, and
His power grew daily; so too grew his foes,
Who, now to their aforetime comrades slaves,
In feigned submission veiled their rancorous hate;
So with low cunning did they bide their time,
And, woe the while, it came. One evening we

Found our dear hero lying bathed in blood—

RAM. Slain—

MER. By foul craft struck down, pierced by a spear
Clean through the back into the heart that beat,
As never heart beat, for his country's honour!

THUSN. Assassinated! By his countrymen!
The Hero of the Teutoburger fight,
The Saviour, the Deliverer! Oh, woe!
Oh Germany, woe upon you! Did you not,
Beseech and pray for a great man, and did
The bounty of the gods not send him to you?
And when from your sore straits he set you free,
Then you hung back from him like cravens, then
Your petty souls before his greatness quailed,
And then—woe for you, Germany, oh woe!—
Then when the saviour had achieved his task,
You snatched him up, the man divinely sent,
And dashed him to destruction at your feet.
(*After a pause.*) Go on! The deed, no doubt, had its reward,
Applauded by a grateful loyal people?

MER. No, lady, no! With the sad tidings spread
A silence o'er the country far and near!
Nor praise nor blame found voice. The years passed on,
And then a whisper here and there was heard,
And men talked vaguely of old better days,
And then they named the man, through whom they came;
And now—now flies afar o'er hill and dale
A cry of yearning anguish for Arminius,
And every tongue, through all our German land,
And every song and saga with one voice
Proclaim, it never bore a nobler son!

THUSN. Ay, even so! 'Tis ever thus with them!
They hold in scorn what lives within their midst,
And drag it down, and trample it underfoot!
What is is nought, what was alone's revered;
Our German greatness grows but from the grave!

MER. 'Twas not a name alone grew from his grave,
His spirit rose from it, a radiant power,

And swept us onwards in the path he trod !
 To unify our forces was his aim,
 To break the mastery of Rome his vow ;
 And now this purpose burns in every breast,
 And for the struggle nerves each manly arm.
 " A Germany all one ! " rings through the vales,
 " One kingdom and one leader ! " is the cry ;
 " Who shall it be ; the standard who shall bear ? "
 Then I reminded them, Thusnelda lives,
 And to Arminius has borne a son !
 " Yes ! " rose the cry ; " it shall be he ! 'Tis he,
 Arminius' son shall lead us ! "

RAM.

Ye kind gods !

THUSN. Is it some feverish frenzy mads my brain ?
 Are these fantastic dreams that round me float ?
 Is what you tell me true ?

MER.

Trust me, it is !

Yet further ; with ten comrades, I was chosen,
 And sent on here to Italy, to set
 You and your son at liberty, and bring
 You home. The readier to achieve our task,
 We all took service in Rome's German cohort ;
 So I contrived to make my way to you ;
 And as a pledge and earnest of her trust
 Do thou accept (*kneeling*) what Germany has sent,
 For thee to place in thy son's hand anon,
 That he may use it, as his father did,
 To uphold his country's honour and its might !

THUSN. His sword ! Arminius' sword ! I know it well.
 Thou noble blade, with unpretending hilt,
 I know thee well ! As thou art, such was he,
 The soul so rich ; the man himself so simple !
 It is the sword ; but he that is to wear it,
 My son—

MER. You tremble ; why thus moved ?—

THUSN.

The boy

Whom in my loneliness and grief I bore,—
 My boy, my Sigmar, my last comfort, Rome

Tore from my arms. She gave him a slave's name,
 And lets me year by year entreat in vain,
 That I might see him once, but for one day !
 If yet he lives, or death has set him free,
 I cannot tell ! Wherefore then ask from me
 Arminius' son ? I have him not ! Alone,
 A withered barren trunk, I stand and mourn !

MER. Nay, do not mourn, Thusnelda, for he lives—

RAM. (*who has been watching at the back, runs forward*).
 Away, away ! I hear a noise within !

THUSN. He lives ! and where, where lives he ?

MER. In Ravenna.

He has grown up, a vigorous young man,
 And at this hour, I know, is on his way
 To Rome—

THUSN. What, here ? To Rome ?

RAM. Hark ! There are voices,
 And footsteps near ! Away !

MER. The hour draws nigh ;
 But one word more ! Again thou'lt see him,—soon,
 Perhaps this very day ! All is prepared
 To rescue him and thee ! Hope, then, have trust—

RAM. Quick ! quick ! Away, away !

[*Exit with him up the stage, R.*]

THUSN. See him again !

But one word, Merovig ! See him again !
 Is't dream ? Or truth ? No, no ; it is no dream.
 This is Arminius' sword, and shall I not
 Within my son's hand place it ? shall I not
 Incite his spirit to a hero's deeds,
 Setting his father's image 'fore his eyes ?
 I shall, I shall ! Ye great, ye gracious gods,
 Oft in the silent night have I besought ye,
 To place within my hands, and on my soul,
 Some mighty purpose yet before I died,—
 To trust me with some mission high and grave,
 That, undistraught by weakness or by hate,
 I might unswervingly my task fulfil,—

Might be Thusnelda still, Arminius' wife,
 And worthy of the German name I bear !—
 This ye have done, have trusted to my hands
 My country's might, her honour, and her future ;
 And here I vow—clutch ye this hand I raise
 In witness of my oath, and hold it fast—
 I will fulfil the task ye have enjoined ;
 I will fulfil it, and, if fail I may,
 I'll break, as breaks the oak before the blast,
 But bend I will not, ever, ever more !

Enter THUMELICUS.

THUM. It is too hot within ! I cannot sleep !
 And still that fellow Këyx haunts my sight !
 So ho ! Who is that woman with the sword ?

RAMIS (*runs in without observing THUMELICUS*).

RAM. He got away ! Unnoticed as he came !

THUSN. Hush ! hush ! look yonder ! Oh, ye gracious gods !

RAM. What ails thee ? What's amiss—

THUSN. Dost thou not see—

There ! Or is't only to my eyes revealed ?

Look yonder, look !

RAM. By the gods' cloud-wrapt throne !

It is Arminius' self from crown to sole !

THUM. Why stare ye so at me, ye crackbrained crones ?

What would ye ? Speak !

THUSN. No ; it is not the shade

Of my Arminius risen from the grave !

No, thine eye flashes, and thy voice rings clear,

Thou liv'st, thou art my son, and—hence, ye tears,

With your bedimming veils !—and let these arms

Enfold thee, clasp thee to my mother-heart !

THUM. What are you after ? Let me—

THUSN. Know'st me not ?

But I, I know thee well—the dimple here,

And here the dark-brown mole. Sigmar, my son,

Dost thou disown the breast that suckled thee,

The arms that rocked thy baby limbs to sleep ?

THUM. Sigmar—I've heard that name before—

THUSN.

Here, take

This sword, 'tis thine, 'tis thy inheritance !

Now flames a brighter lustre from thine eyes !

Oh, look upon me, longer, closer still !

And let me steep and cheer my wounded soul

In the transparent depths of thy dear eyes !

THUM. That look ! That voice ! Am I gone crazed ?

THUSN.

Hush ! hush !

Music !—These are the songs of home ! Oh, list,

How soft and sweet ! How ! Comes on night so soon ?

I see thee not, yet do I hold thee fast—

We shall not part, my son—

THUM.

She totters, sinks !

Come here !

RAM. She faints ! Support her !

THUSN.

Oh, my son !

(She is lowered to the ground in the arms of THUMELICUS.)

RAMIS kneels beside her. Curtain falls.)

ACT II.

Hall in the Imperial Palace, with pillared arcades, through which the inner chambers are seen at the back. Left and right against the walls are tables and chairs inlaid with ivory and gold, tripods, &c. In the background slaves and freedmen. In the centre of the stage senators and knights, some in groups conversing, others moving about. In the foreground (R.) FLAVIUS ARMINIUS standing moodily apart, leaning against a pillar. VALERIUS and GALLUS enter (C.) while TITUS MARCIUS enters (L.).

VAL. Ah, here he comes !

GALL. Welcome, friend Marcius, welcome.

MAR. Give you good day, my friends ! Is Caius Cæsar Yet to be seen ?

GALL. No : he has summoned in Cassius and Piso only.

MAR. (*in a whisper*). Was it not From this same Piso's house that Cæsar took Livia his wife away with him, and bade Her husband send her on without delay A letter of divorce ?

GALL. Ay, so it was,
All but the letter of divorce !

MAR. How so ?

GALL. Rather, methinks, a letter of exchange !

MAR. Excellent ! Capital !

VAL. (*in a low voice*). Hush ! are you mad ?
(*Aloud to MARCIUS.*) You at the palace were a guest last night ?

MAR. I was.

VAL. And did things all go pleasantly ?

GALL. Was Cæsar cheerful?

MAR. Too much so at first,
And later on too little! Cæsonia brought him
Sylla, the famed mathematician,
Who, in obedience to an old command,
Had cast the Cæsar's horoscope—

VAL. What then?

MAR. *(in a low voice, as he takes them across with him to the foreground, L.)*

Let us, I pray you, step aside; I see
Flavius Arminius standing over there,
And I don't trust your renegades!

GALL. Now, speak!
Proceed!

VAL. What happened?

MAR. In walks Sylla, makes
Obeisance grave and mute, and hands the Cæsar
A tablet with this brief inscription, "Cæsar,
Not Brutus, but a Cassius threatens thee!"

VAL. What say'st thou?

GALL. How? A Cassius? Can it be?
And he? And Cæsar?

MAR. He grew deadly pale;
Then, starting up, he stormed at Sylla in
The coarsest phrase, who, blenching not a jot,
Quietly answers, "Thus the stars have spoken!"
Then Cæsar, cowed to silence, bites his lips,
Across his forehead lightnings seem to play,
And his eyes droop, all life gone out of them!
Anon he laughs out loud, and rubs his hands:
"I have it," he exclaims, "the danger's past!
Write off to Capito, the Quæstor, straight,
'Tis Cæsar's will, that all on Roman soil
Who bear the name of Cassius, lose their heads!"
We all stood paralysed; at last the Prefect
Of the Prætorians courteously advanced,—
Cassius, you know, the Cæsar's favourite,—
And to divert him from this dangerous mood,

Exclaimed half jestingly : " Ha ! wouldst thou so ?
 My name is also Cassius, so my head
 Must leave my shoulders, then ? " The Cæsar paused,
 And, measuring the man from head to foot,
 Said very quietly, " Well, what of that ? "
 Then turned away, and Cassius grew ash-pale
 Even to the lips !

Enter CORNELIUS SABINUS, L.

GALL. And serve him, too, right well,
 The venomous fungus that shot up so high
 From swamps and filth 'neath the imperial rays !
 'Twould serve him right, say I !

VAL. Speak lower, friends !
 The tribune, see, Cornelius Sabinus,
 Has just come in—he's Cassius' right hand.

GALL. Speak lower, then, but speak,—how did it end ?

MAR. All right ! Cæsonia the Augusta first
 Got Sylla to withdraw, then whilst with wine
 And kisses she cajoled the Cæsar, chid him,
 Reminding him how 'mongst the troops there were
 Thousands of Cassii, and the stir 'twould make
 Were his command to reach the Legions' ears ;
 Then Cæsar—to be brief—at once resolved,
 Of all his Cassiuses he'd only wipe
 These out whom he especially disliked,
 And thereupon we left—

VAL. And that was all ?

MAR. Well, for the moment, yes ! But I have heard,
 Forty death-warrants were despatched by dawn
 Into the provinces !

VAL. By dawn to-day ?

GALL. And afterwards ?—

MAR. Hush ! hush ! The Cassius !

(During the latter part of this dialogue CASSIUS CHÆREA, Prefect of the Prætoriana, has entered at the back of the stage, coming from the rooms within, and has advanced with some slaves to centre.)

CASS. (*to the slaves*). The palanquin! Cæsar will to the bath!

Go one of you, and let the empress know!

(*Exeunt two slaves.*)

You, Consulares, Cæsar waits for you!

(MARCHUS, GALLUS, VALERIUS, FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, and the others salute him and retire up, with the exception of CORNELIUS SABINUS, and disappear into the inner rooms.)

(*Aside.*) Now then, to business! No more loitering now!

(*To a third slave.*)

Cornelius Sabinus, seek him out!

I would have speech with him!

CORNELIUS SABINUS (*advancing*). He waits your summons!

CASS. Good morrow, tribune! Any news for me?

CORN. Nothing, save that the gladiators, those Whom Cæsar sent for to Ravenna, have Arrived this morning. On this scroll you'll find Their names, and also what each man can do!

CASS. (*taking the list*). The gladiators of Ravenna! Ay, all right.

I heard they had arrived.

CORN. What kind of night

Has Cæsar had, and is he well to-day?

CASS. Quite brisk and well, more gracious, too, than ever!

CORN. (*after a pause*). Cassius, we are alone, and safe to speak!

CASS. (*after glancing round*). Art sure of that? Well, know then, every day

The danger grows more imminent, and calls
For measures of defence! I mean not trifles,
Such as the trick that Cæsar lately played
On Piso; no, nor even that yesterday
He had the head of Lepidus cut off,
To fill the empty Treasury with his wealth—

CORN. And we are here in Rome, and we are Romans!

CASS. I will not even say how he profaned
The Dioscuri's great time-hallowed shrine,
Placing his statue side by side with theirs,

CASS. Were he mad,
Quite mad, I should not care ! But 'tis just this
Half blindness, this unsteady feeble glance
Of the soul's eye, this same paralysis
Of mind which wakes up suddenly to nerve
Its tiger spring, whose aim none can foresee,
'Tis this that scares me ! The insane caprice,
Which prompted him this morning to send out
Twoscore death-warrants, in some sudden fit
May on his tablets set my name. In brief,

I'll end this torture, and for ever !

CORN.

How,

Thou wouldst, then—

CASS.

He must hence, and quickly too !

I know thou yearnest after our old Rome ;

What Cassius, Brutus did has fired thy brain !

Well, be it so, let us repeat their deed !

He must away ! Amazed ? And doubting ?

CORN.

No,

Lead only thou, and fear not I will follow !

CASS. This very day then let us set to work !

I will take counsel with the Senators,

Do thou find how the Prætorians are disposed ;

All else some fitter moment !—Hush ! I see

The Cæsar coming.

*(CALIGULA appears with his suite,
and advances slowly.)*

CORN.

Who are these with him ?

CASS. That's Piso there, the same whose wife he stole

The other day, and Titus Marcius,

An idle prate-a-pace ; the rest a troop

Of creeping things, that fawn and quake for life !

The old man with the bandage o'er his eye,

Who now adjusts the folds of Cæsar's robe,

Is Flavius Arminius.—Him thou knowest ?

CORN. Arminius' brother, who our Varus slew

In the Teutoburger Forest ?

CASS.

Ay, the same ;

And he adjusts the folds of Cæsar's robe !

CORN. In his place I should blush—

CASS.

Pshaw ! man, he is

Just such a German, as we sons of Rome !

*(CALIGULA, resting on the arm of CAIUS PISO, and attended by
TITUS MARCIUS, GALLUS, VALERIUS, FLAVIUS ARMINIUS,
and other senators and equites, has meanwhile reached the
centre of the stage ; in the background, slaves.)*

CASS. *(after saluting CALIGULA, to the slaves).* The litter,
ho !

CALIGULA. You'd have me to the bath ?
No, Cassius, no ! I'm thoroughly worn out,
So sick and weary, I feel like to drop.

CASS. Ho, slaves, a chair ! A chair there, for the Cæsar !

CALIG. As I was saying, Piso, the dread weight
Of empire lies too heavy on my soul ;
The duty of chastising irks my conscience,
The hourly claims on all my powers exhaust me.
Add, too, the perils, toils of the campaign
In Germany.

PISO. Yet such laurels followed them,
As even Germanicus, thy mighty father,
Did never win.

CASS. (*aside, to CORNELIUS*). He made some dozen slaves
Appear, disguised as Germans, in the scrub,
Whereon two legions presently must scour
The forest through, and set some trophies up.
That, friend, was his campaign in Germany !

CALIG. Yes, this campaign—thy hand, Arminius !

(*Supported by ARMINIUS and PISO, letting
himself down upon the chair.*)

We achieved wonders, and our foemen fled—
Thou, Flavius, too, wert there.

FLA. I was, my liege.

CALIG. And saw them run, these German churls ?

FLA.

Oh yes,

They ran, great Cæsar !

CALIG. Ha ! your colour mounts ;

You are a German—oh, I don't forget !

FLA. If love for mighty Rome, and loyalty
In Cæsar's service shown, can make a Roman,
Then I am one !

CALIG. Well said, ay, very well !

Thanks, thanks ! (*Pause.*)

CASS. (*approaching CALIGULA*). Thou art not like thyself ;
' what care

Despoils us of thy smile ?

CALIG.

Vertigo, friend !

Simple vertigo ! Strange ! The old man stands
Before my eyes for ever.

CASS. What old man ?

CALIG. I'll tell you.

*(He makes a sign ; the bystanders fall back several paces,
PISO and MARCIUS, who are stationed behind his
chair, and CASSIUS, who stands before him, alone
remaining.)*

Yesternight, when Livia
Had left my chamber,—hark you, in your ear,
That woman, Piso, is a paragon.

PISO. You make me proud, my Cæsar.

CALIG. She had gone,
And I lay sleepless on my couch, when, lo !
The curtain rustled, and comes gliding in
My uncle Drusus, who took poison—then
Silanus, my wife's father, who, you know,
Cut his own throat in the bath, 'stead of his beard ;
And he held up the gory knife to me,
As though 'twas I had edged it for the fool ;
And lastly came Tiberius, my uncle,
Who bore a pillow—yes, the very same
Which I, as those that love me not report,
Did smother him withal,¹ and thereupon,
Grasping each others' hands, the three began—*(laughing convulsively.)*

I nearly died with laughing ; 'twas, ye gods,
Too monstrous, too absurd—began to dance,
Slowly at first, then faster, faster still,
And still more close they span their circle round me,
And still approached me nearer as I lay.
(With a shout.) There, Cassius, look, look !—there they are
again !

¹ The allusion here is founded on the statement in Suetonius (Ostus Cæsar Caligula, c. 12) that Caligula was said by some to be privy to the poisoning of Tiberius,—that while the old man still continued to breathe, Caligula, finding him resist an attempt to take his signet-ring from his finger, ordered a pillow to be thrown upon him, and even throttled the dying man with his own hand.

Avaunt! Ye shall not—Hence,
 Ye icy hands! Back from my brow, I say—
(Sinks back in the chair in a frenzy.)

PISO *(aside)*. Horrible!

MARCIVS *(aside)*. Fearful!

CASS. My hair stands on end,
 The life-blood curdles at my heart! *(Aloud.)* A doctor!
 A doctor, ho!

CALIG. *(starting wildly up)*. A doctor? I'll have none!
 As true as I am Caius Cæsar, none!
 Off goes his head who babbles in surmise!

(After a pause recovers his composure.)

How fares it, my good Cassius, with my tawny
 Hyrcanian whelps—the lions six, I mean,
 Which Tubero sent me from Damascus—eh?

CASS. Now they have rested, they show fresh and fierce
 As one could wish; thou mayst at any time
 Employ them in the Circus.

CALIG. That is well!
 Something you said of gladiators, too?

CASS. Who from Ravenna have arrived to-day;
 This scroll contains their numbers and their names!

CALIG. *(takes up the paper and runs his eye over it)*.
 Here's fifty named, and those from Capua,
 From Nola—Good! They'll make a holocaust;
 Life's ruddy juice will flow in copious streams,
 And steam in fragrant vapours! Pah! Even that,
(Throws the scroll upon the table near him.)
 How flavourless, how stale! There's no spice, none,
 For a dulled palate, no provocative
 For unstrung nerves!

CASS. *(who meanwhile has retired up the stage)*.
 Room! Room! So please you, room
 For the Augusta!

CÆSONIA *(attended by several women, who remain at the back, enters through the centre door)*.

Thanks to the gods that still
 I find you here; I almost feared that I

Should come too late.

CALIG. Joy never comes too late ;
And Beauty's welcome, come whene'er she may.

CÆS. And art thou well ? Thou look'st so pale, my Cæsar.

CALIG. But thou art bright as Aphrodite's self !
This charming dress, that shows the noble limbs
More than it veils their symmetry ; this head,
That on this snow-white neck so proudly sways !
And when I think that this most lovely head—

CÆS. Well, that this head ?

CALIG. That it must fall, if I
Command, a twofold rapture thrills me through !
But for the present—come, I'll rest me here !

(CÆSONIA conducts him to the chair.)

But for the present let this lovely head
Devise how we shall make the day run by !

CÆS. You will not to the bath, then ?

CALIG. No, no bath !
(*Half aside, and mysteriously.*) It minds me of Silanus, who in
the bath—

CÆS. Why fret about the dead ? Compose yourself !
With music fortify your listless nerves.

CALIG. (*as before*). What ! Thou'dst have music, for the
ghosts to dance ?

CÆS. (*aside, to CASSIUS, whilst CALIGULA lies back in the
chair, his head dropped, and staring upon vacancy*).

These fancies fright me. Mark, O Cassius, mark,
How fixedly he stares ! How shall I stir
The stagnant waters of this torpid soul ?
I seek in vain, where'er I turn mine eye.

CÆS. (*aside*). Yet need there is, that something should be
found !

This brooding makes him savage in the end,
And the sick tiger no caresses tame.

CALIG. (*starting up*). Cæsonia, where art thou ? Stay by
me !

CÆS. (*advancing to him*). Come, let us to the gardens,
sweet, and there

Amuse ourselves with tennis.

CALIG.

No—Yes—No—

I cannot yet resolve to be resolved !

Let us, my goddess, first arrange the show

Of gladiators which I mean to give.

The rascals have arrived !

(*Unfolding the scroll which lies upon the table.*)

See ! what is this ?

Thumelicus—I seem to know that name ;

How should I know it ? H'm ! Thumelicus—

MAR. (*comes forward*). 'Tis very like, that from Thusnelda's prayer,

Which I presented yesterday, the name

Has rested in your memory—

FLA.

Thusnelda !

CALIG. Thusnelda ? Was not that Arminius' wife,

Who on a time 'gainst Varus took the field ?

And was it not my sire, Germanicus,

Who took her prisoner, when shortly after

His vengeance swooped upon the German woods ?

MAR. 'Twas even so, and thy great sire, my liege, Brought her to Rome.

CALIG.

Tiberius, my uncle,

When she refused to attend the victor's car,

In the triumph of Germanicus, did he not

Command them tear the infant from her breast

She to Arminius bore in prison here,

And threaten—

MAR.

Yes, he threatened her to slay

The child, unless in silence she obeyed

His every 'hest, my liege ; and she obeyed !

CALIG. (*aside*). Ay, he had brains, the old man with the pillow !

(*Aloud.*) And what does this Thusnelda want from me ?

What prays she for ?

MAR.

A favour she implores,

As oft refused already as besought,

That, after many years, she once, but once,

May be permitted to behold her son,
Who by Tiberius' order has been trained
Far from his mother at Ravenna's school.

CALIG. What say'st thou? In Ravenna, is that so?
Thumelicus—Thumel—

MAR. That is her son!

CALIG. Thumelicus, Arminius', Thumelda's son!

FLA. (*aside*). Arminius' son, my nephew?

CALIG. See now, see!

How things combine! She longs to see her son,
And he is here. Arminius' son! Oh rare!

(*Bending back to CÆSONIA.*)

What do you think, love? Can we not devise
Something from this, of taste most exquisite?
A sport to charm and kindle,—a delight
To stir not merely sense, but soul withal,—
A sight more stimulating than the spice
Of Taproban and India, eh?

CÆS. What sight,

What sport, my Cæsar?

CALIG. How! What sport?

A combat, my sweet innocence! Just think,
A youth, before his mother's very eyes
To fight, bleed, fall! Such sport was never known,
Since first the Circus' sand was drenched in blood!

(*Springing up.*)

FLA. (*aside*). Oh shame and grief! Oh horror and
dismay!

CALIG. (*walks a few paces rapidly to and fro, then stopping
suddenly in front of CÆSONIA, with an expression of
irresolution*). Yet, looked at rightly, this is, after all,
Mere empty show,—means nothing, nothing done!

CÆS. (*in a whisper to CÆSONIA*). Now use thy ready brain!

Let not the toy,
Scarce even grasped, slip from the nerveless hand!

CALIG. What, pray, to me is this Arminius' son?
A creature most contemptible, a thing
Of pap like that mine enemy! go to!

A gladiator merely, and as he
Can't win, where were my triumph if he fell?

CÆS. How! is't no triumph, that Arminius' brood
Shall cease to be a menace to thy power?
No triumph, that the child and mother, kept
As pledges by thine uncle anxiously,
Become to thee as nothing, scarcely fit
In the arena to make sport for Rome?

CASS. (*aside to CÆSONIA*). Oh, excellent! go on!

CÆS. Is it no triumph, that,
If with the Germans many a weary year
Thy father fought, and never could subdue them,
Victory should light on thee, his greater son;
That thou art first to bring Germania low?
For not the victor in one bloody fight,
But he who makes his foe a mock and shame,
'Tis he that truly sinks him in the dust.

CALIG. Yes, thou art right! This gives significance
And background to the pleasant stirring sport.
Now the whole picture stands before my soul:
Thusnelda, with the oak-wreath in her hair;
Her son, as German weaponed and attired,
Stretched 'neath the blade of his antagonist.
Who bears my weapons, wears my purple too;
All this shall, loud as Jove's own thunder, speak
Caligula's triumph and Germania's fall!

CASS. (*aside to CÆSONIA*). Now we are safe!

FLA. (*aside*). Help, rescue, O ye gods!

CALIG. Wine, bring me wine, and let the music sound!
(*To CÆSONIA*.) Come to my arms, divine enchantress, come!
This thou, thou a mere woman, couldst devise!
Come to my arms! for now I am at ease;
A wish, an aim once more before me stands,
I still can will, and therefore still I live!

CASS. (*aside*). Ay! but not long, else Sylla's stars do lie!

CALIG. Wine, ho! Henceforth a festal day shall be
This day, which flung a new excitement's pearl

Upon my life's forlorn and arid strand !

*(Music heard without, which continues
to the end of the scene.)*

Thou, Cassius, straightway shalt before me bring

These gladiators of Ravenna ; thou,

Piso, away, and in my name salute

The Senate ; tell the fathers I invite them

To Caius Cæsar's triumph, every man.

Why do you pause ? Away !

*(Exit PISO. Enter slaves with
golden goblets and cups.)*

CÆS. *(seizing a cup).*

Here, here is wine !

CALIG. *(seizing a goblet, pours for CÆSONIA).* Thanks, Hebe,
thanks ! This goblet to the fair

And happy issue of this sport of mine !

CASS. To whom dost thou confide the ædile's charge,

To see that all things needful are prepared

Beforehand at the Circus ?

CALIG. *(looking round the circle).* The ædile's charge

To whom confide it ? *(After a pause.)* Flavius Arminius,

Approach !—To thee, who on the Weser once

Closed to thy brother's prayer thine ear and heart ;

Thou, that all Roman art, German no more,

To thee do I confide the ædile's charge !

FLA. To me, my liege, to me—

CALIG.

Hence to Thusnelda,

And to her take with you her long-lost son !

Let him be hers until the games begin ;

Then he shall fight before his mother's eyes,

And she shall see him stricken by his doom !

This is my will, so bear it unto her,

And mark it to the letter be fulfilled ;

For should it prove that thou art more a German,

And less a Roman, than thou late didst vaunt,

Then, hypocrite, by Kronion's thunderbolts,

(Hurls the goblet to his feet.)

Then shall thy head, even as this goblet, roll !

(*Aside to CÆSONIA.*) What say'st thou, dovelet? Now I have them all,

The whole stock of Arminius, in my net.

(*Aloud.*) And now away! Let the flutes shrilly sound,

Awake the pean, let the goblets ring!

Till to Olympus high our revel mount,

And down to Orcus' depths its echoes clang!

I live again! To live is to enjoy.

So, rapture, let thy sparkling fountains flow,

And sweep us onwards in thy surging waves!

(*Exit, leading CÆSONIA; the rest crowd tumultuously after them.*)

FLA. (*advancing*). Accursed who dreamt, and from his dream awakes,

The toy of blind caprice, of brutish power!

ACT III.

SCENE AS IN THE FIRST ACT.

Enter GLABRIO from the back (R.), with LYCISCA, who has a chaplet of roses in her hair, several chaplets on her arm, and a basket of flowers in her hand.

GLAB. Not to the Forum, no! You're to come here;
I want you here.

LYC. And shall I learn at last,
Why you make me, who, scarce arrived in Rome,
At once betook me to my trade, and had
Buyers like bees come swarming round me, why
You make me leave the cheery market-place,
And come on here to this dark dismal house?

GLAB. Why, quotha? Why? Because I am dead beat,
Too tired to stir a finger, that's the fact,
With laying roundly on these rascals' backs;
Because 'tis you must bring the knaves to reason,
And smooth them down!

LYC. (*sets down her basket, and throws the chaplets upon it*).
Why, what has happened, eh?

GLAB. Fighting has happened! all because of you,
Between Thumelicus and Ksyx.

LYC. Fools!

GLAB. And then the lad Thumelicus, he found
His mother here, a German woman, whom
Rome keeps in prison here! Now, as this woman
Is, as her husband was, of princely birth—

LYC. Is't possible? Why then Thumelicus should be
A prince as well! And we, we ventured, we,
To be upon such easy terms with him!

His ancestors will not half like it, will they ?

GLAB. Oh, 'tis a great mischance ! Just what you said,
The rest of my young fellows also said ;
"My prince ! my king !" was everywhere the cry ;
With here and there a "Savage !" "German Bear !"
And every one was ready with his joke !

LYC. And he ?

GLAB. Struck with his fists all round about,
And as the rest would pay him off in kind,
Out with the whip's the word ! and, as I said,
I've trounced the knaves till I am fairly beat.
Therefore I sent for you to quiet them,
And bring my lads into right trim again ;
The fight comes off to-morrow, and, you know,
Fretting before a fight will never do.
Moreover, Cæsar picked Thumelicus
Out from the rest at the parade to-day,
And bade me bear in mind the lad should prove
His pluck and training in to-morrow's show.

LYC. A bootless hint, methinks ! He's up in all
The school can teach, and valiant as a lion.

GLAB. School-teaching, pah ! The arena's sand is hot,
And he who for the first time fights with bare
Cold steel instead of the school's sword of wood,
Who sees himself set face to face before
Such an antagonist as Diodorus—

LYC. Not, sure, the Cappadocian Diodorus,
"The Son of Victory," as they call him here,
For that Colossus ne'er has met his match.

GLAB. That's why they chose him for antagonist !

LYC. Then has the Cæsar sworn he is to die ;
Need must that he should fall !

GLAB. What nonsense, girl !
No one can ever tell who is to fall.
And if the lad but step into the lists
As cool and plucky as has been his wont,
Who knows to which side victory may incline ?
So set his mad head straight upon his shoulders,

Smooth down the wrath-swollen veins upon his brow,
That rage and hatred draw no blinding veil
Across his eyes to-morrow; make him laugh,
Caress him—

LYC. No, I must provoke him first
To vent his fury all on me, and then
He'll do from sheer remorse whate'er I wish!

GLAB. Good, good, I will not cobble at thy craft;
But tell him,—for he dearly loves display—
That he shall fight in the arena, armed
In German fashion.

LYC. Shall he?

GLAB. Not a word
Of Diodorus! Speak of Kēyx, rather,
As chosen out for his antagonist.

LYC. And how if Diodorus kill him, eh?

GLAB. Why, who can tell? Confound him! Though he
did—

LYC. Ay, ay! He is a gladiator! Meant
In shame to die, as I in shame to live!
What matter we, if only Rome's amused?

GLAB. What nonsense you do talk! Are you gone mad!
No feeling, mind—no pity, no emotion,
Unless you wish to taste this whip of mine!
Think, girl, of gold and gain, and your own good—
All else is stuff, not worth a moment's thought!
But hush, he comes! And see, how red he looks,
How out of sorts, and clean distraught with rage!
By all the gods, did ever lad look thus,
Who had to fight next day before the Cæsar?
To work, then, girl! Take him in hand, use all
Your skill! Meanwhile, 'tis best I step aside!

*(Exit up the stage, L., as THUMELICUS
comes down from the back, R.)*

THUM. *(who has not noticed GLABRIO and LYCISCA, advances).*
Plague on my fate! I had to do without
A mother when as child I needed her,
And find her now, when I could do without her!

By blood I am a prince of high degree,
 A prince, without a rap! And all the fruit,
 I gather from the news of my descent,
 Is that the mongrel scum here rail at me
 As Bear-Prince, Beggar-King! But wait a bit;
 I've scored it up, and they shall pay for it!

LYC. (*dropping her basket and wreaths as if by accident*).
 Oh dear, my flowers!

THUM. How! You here in Rome,
 Lycisca! Can it be?

LYC. (*kneeling and picking up her flowers*). And is that all?
 You here in Rome! and never budge an inch
 To help me with my flowers?

THUM. Flowers? How!
 You have already stocked your shop with wares,
 And ply, though scarce arrived, to make me wild,
 The old disgusting business?

LYC. How! disgusting?
 Are my poor flowers disgusting? Just look here,
 These lovely roses, these anemones.

THUM. Away! Is this a market-place for flowers?
 Be off, I say! Seek purchasers elsewhere!

LYC. (*who meanwhile has refilled her basket, and laid the
 wreaths upon it*). And so I will, you ill-conditioned
 churl,

Evermore scolding, finding fault! The Consular
 I met just now, was more polite a deal;
 A man well up in years, grey hairs, and yet
 He smiled and patted me upon the cheeks,
 And threw this tablet here into my basket.

(*Hands him the tablet.*)

Just look there, read! you can't, though, by the by!

THUM. Might if I liked, but won't!

LYC. Well, listen, then!
 "Thou with the beautiful roses, what sellest thou, roseate
 maiden?

Roses? Or is it thyself? Or both together? Confess!"

THUM. And that you call polite? By all the gods

Then are the lashes of a whip polite !

LYC. You naughty one, be good ! 'Twas all a jest !
Come, you wild creature, let us make it up.
What's the old man to us ? Look at me straight,
And smile ! You won't ? Oh, what's that dangling from
Your girdle there ? What can you want with such
A butcher's knife ?

THUM. That's no affair of yours !

LYC. Do tell me what it is—

THUM. My father's sword.

LYC. Your father's sword ? Who was your father, then ?

THUM. He was a German prince, his name Arminius,
And smote the Romans in—what was the name
My mother gave't ?—the Teutoburger Forest !

LYC. German ! The word is hideous to the ears !
A German prince ! Then you too are, no doubt,
A German prince, just as your father was ?

THUM. What ! Will you also mock me, like the rest ?
As a Wild Man and Bearskin rail at me ?
You dare, you jade, you ?

LYC. Oh ye righteous gods !
I rail at you ? not I ! I mock you ? No !
Not I indeed ! Ah, how you frighten me !
I'm all a-tremble ! Why make such a fuss
About a heedless word ? For my part, I
Would rather not be German, I confess.
'Tis but at best—

THUM. A bit of ill-luck ? that
Is what you think ? Well, on the market-place
To post one's self for show, tricked out, like you,
To titter, ogle right and left, to sell
Vile favours for vile gold, that surely is
More than a bit of mere ill-luck, 'tis shame
As well !

LYC. Oh excellent ! This is my thanks
For coming from Ravenna after you—
For stealing to you from the market-place—
I could not get to see you soon enough—

And therefore—

THUM. Peace! No whimpering!

LYC. Yes! Despise,

Abuse, and scold me!—Oh, it serves me right!

Fool that I am, why am I fond of you,

And cannot bear you should—

THUM. There, there, don't weep!

It makes me furious, to see you weep!

Come now, dry up your eyes! My mother's talk

My comrades' gibes, the sneers of Këyx had

Set all the blood a-boiling in my veins,

And now you come to—

LYC. I? By all the gods,

To me 'twas glorious, that a German prince,

For such you are, should fight to-morrow, armed

In German fashion, in the Circus—

THUM. I?

I? Armed in German fashion, in the Circus—

LYC. A casque with vulture's pinions—think of that!—

A bearskin on your shoulders, and your shield

Studded with bosses!—How! this fires you not!

You're not delighted! Time was, you were fond

Of fine array, and foreign armour, now—

THUM. No, no, I tell you, no! I will not fight

In German armour!

LYC. Have you lost your wits?

Or has your mother put you out of heart?

THUM. My mother? Pshaw! She does not even know—

LYC. Not know, that you're a gladiator? You

Have kept it dark from her, have never said—

THUM. She never asked, and what was I to say?

LYC. What then, by all the gods, should keep you back?—

THUM. I will not fight in a bear's garb; I won't

Be made the laughing-stock, the scoff, the jeer

Of yonder scum—

LYC. How? Frightened they will scoff

And jeer at you? And just then I was glad,

That now it was your turn to scoff at them,

Chastise them, too—

THUM. Chastise them? How, wench, how?
With what? Speak, speak!

LYC. You still can ask, with what?
If you, whose German lineage they made light of,
You they dubb'd Bearskin, Savage, if you now,
As if in sheer defiance of their gibes,
Show in the lists to-morrow as a German,
And if you win,—and win you surely must—

THUM. Ha! as a German conquer them! I see!

LYC. If Këyx, chosen for your antagonist—

THUM. Këyx, you say?

LYC. If that insulting braggart,
Torn by the strong claws of the German bear,
Lies bleeding in the dust beneath your feet,
Is that not chastisement, that not revenge?

THUM. Këyx, picked out as my antagonist!
Oh that I had him here, that eye to eye
I had him now before me! From his jaws
That I might tear out his blaspheming tongue!
Oh that it were to-morrow!

LYC. You will fight, then?
Seriously now, you will?

THUM. Wither this hand,
If 'tis not bathed in Këyx's blood to-morrow!

LYC. You shrink no longer from the German garb?

THUM. In a fool's jacket I'd array myself,
So I might strike this villain Këyx dead!

LYC. Ha! your eye kindles, and your cheek's on fire!
Look, now you please me, now are once more
My own dear handsome gladiator,—yes—
And therefore you shall—No! not just quite yet—
Not till this evening, when I come again,
And if you're brisk and all alive, as now—
Then I'll repay you with a little kiss!

THUM. (*catching her as she tries to step away*).
And why not now? Oh, let me have it now!

LYC. (*slipping from his grasp*). No! Loose me! Go!

THUM. (*running after her*). You shall, you must !

LYC.

No, no !

Not till this evening !

THUM. (*embracing her*). No, no, now !

Enter THUSNELDA by a side-door, R.

THUSN.

My son !

(THUMELICUS takes his arms from LYCISCA.)

THUSN. Who is that woman, boy ?

LYCISCA (*to THUMELICUS*).

Is this thy mother ?

THUSN. And thou, who art thou ? Speak !

LYC. (*who has replaced her wreaths upon her arm, and caught up her basket*). Why, like thyself,

A woman, only younger by a trifle,

Not high-born, but good-looking, lively, too ;

No princess truly, but a Roman ; I

Am like the roses 'tis my trade to sell—

I have a bloom, and prickles, too, at need ;

Now, German princess, art content ?

(*Throwing THUMELICUS a kiss.*) To-night ! (*Exit up L.*)

THUSN. I know, my son, misfortune to base souls

Is but a mark for scoffing and for scorn ;

Nor do I marvel that this creature, like

Her fellows, was most insolent and rude ;

I marvel thou canst find her worthy thee,

And that thy love—attempt not to gainsay it—

Thou lovest her—

THUM. I ? Well, yes ! I like the girl.

She's pretty, very pretty, and beguiles

The dull hours—

THUSN.

Do I hear aright ! She is

Merely the plaything of thy idle hours ?

Thou lovest her not, scarce feel'st respect for her ?

In Germany, my son, they honour woman ;

In each and all the rudest warriors prize

The mother who has borne them on her breast,

And in full faith expects prophetic words

From bashful maids' undesecrated lips !

THUM. Oh yes, in Germany, but we're in Rome.

THUSN. We are indeed, and there have been too long!—
Enough! As I have hitherto lived on
But for the joy of having you once more,
Turn we our thoughts to things of grave account!
For a great future lies before you now,
And on thy head, my son, and in thy hands
Have destinies been laid will shake the world!

THUM. Again you speak what I don't understand!

THUSN. In time thou wilt. At present only this!
What thou wert born, being Arminius' son,
Sigmar, thou knowest; now I fain would learn,
What, from my care estranged, thou hast become,
Whilst tended by my foes?

THUM. What I've become?
Tall, as you see, and strong in wind and limb!

THUSN. Thanks to the gods, that they have lent thee strength.

A man's best heritage! But tell me, how
And to what uses Rome has trained thy strength?
To menial service? To the plough, perhaps?
Or in some workshop did she place thee, there
To learn some mean degrading handicraft?

THUM. I never fingered tool except the sword ;
To handle arms, that is the craft I learned !

THUSIN. They trained thee as a warrior? They! In this
I see your guiding hand, ye mighty gods!
You blind the man you purpose to destroy;
You do not strike him down, you do but strew
A pebble in his path, you let him slip,
Then stumbling, by his own weight overborne,
Down, down he rolls amain to the abyss
Himself has cleft, anon to close him in!
Now they are ours! Thanks, thanks, ye mighty gods!
Themselves they tied the scourge upon their backs,
Themselves they for their bosoms bared the knife;
No longer you uphold them, they are lost.

Enter FLAVIUS ARMINIUS (L. centre).

FLA. Thusnelda!

THUSN. (*shuddering*). Woe is me!

THUM. What is the matter?

THUSN. Did you not hear the voice that called my name?
But once I've heard that voice, and never, never,
Can I forget its deep-detested tones!

FLA. (*advances*). Thusnelda, hear me!

THUSN. (*turning slowly round to him*). It is he! 'Tis no
Delusion! Yes, 'tis he! What wouldst with me,
Thou traitor, recreant to thy native land,
Shame of a noble stock, unworthy, base—
Thou in whose name Germania and Rome,
Treason and loyalty, slavery and freedom,
Combine and clash in discord most abhorred,—
What wouldst thou, Flavius Arminius? Speak!

FLA. I know my presence is unwelcome here!
When years ago to thee, my brother's wife,
On this same spot I offered kindly aid,
In wrath thou didst command me to be gone,
Didst curse me—

THUSN. Did to thee what thou hadst done
To my Arminius! As on Weser's strand,
Treating his noble earnest words with scorn,
Thou at thy brother's breast did launch thy spear,
So after thee I hurled my curse, and flung
All my abhorrence at thy feet! Begone!
I cried, and go thou didst. Why here again?

FLA. Not he, who then went from thee wild with rage—
I come again, an older, gentler man,
And I had hoped to find thee gentler too,
More just, more moderate,—not to the grave
Alone more near, but to right views as well.
For 'twas no wish of mine that parted us
Two brothers; no, the stream of destiny
Swept him away, and me it landed here!
And could his spirit now, from yonder heights,
Where truth abides and peace, descend to us,
And I, reposing perfect trust in thee,
Drew nigh to him, appeased as now he is—

THUSN. Thou liest! Thou wouldst tremble and grow pale
Before his gaze, and hide thy face in fear
Before his light-illuminated lineaments;
Dost doubt me—

(*Pointing to THUMELICUS, who has meanwhile been standing apart.*)

Look! Here is Arminius!

Now look into his eyes, if look thou dare!

FLA. (*covering his face with his hands*). Arminius! Ye
eternal gods!

THUM. Look! Mother, what's
This all about? I'm sorry for the man!

THUSN. Be loving as the sun to all men, show
Pity to the wild beast thou hast struck down,
The foe that's at thy feet; but to the traitor
No pity, none, but hate, remorseless hate!

FLA. Well, then, as thou art unappeasable—

THUSN. Yes, so I am, I am, and unto death
Will to the vile be unappeasable!

FLA. Then expiation, shame, and penitence
Be henceforth banished from my soul! Away!
You will not have my love, then have my hate!
Learn, then, the orders that the Cæsar sends!
To-morrow, in the Circus, 'tis his wish,
In princely robes, the oak-wreath in your hair,
That you be present at the games, which he
Has promised there—

THUSN. I? I? In princely robes?
I, in the Circus? Is this jest? Or do
Thy words conceal some darker deadlier meaning?

FLA. Segest's proud daughter is brought low at last!
Now learn this also;—'tis the Cæsar's will,
This youngster here, thy son, to-morrow should
For the first time and in thy presence show
His skill to Rome, and to her Emperor.

THUSN. How! Show his skill? His skill? What skill?
You smile.

Speak, man of half-suggested words, what is

This threatened mischief? Speak it plainly out!

FLA. Thou know'st not then that Rome has spared thy son,
As hundreds have been spared, only to make
His wounds and gashes and his streaming blood
A pastime for the populace of Rome?
Dost thou not know they learn to fight and slay
By rule, and make a business of their art,
And are named gladiators after it?
Dost know them not? Well (*pointing to THUMELICUS*), see
one here, who has

To fight to-morrow, and before thy face,
In German garb and arms, for death or life!

THUSN. For death or life! And in the German garb!
Sigmar, I don't believe him! Speak to me!
Art thou what this man says? Speak! Art thou? Speak!

THUM. The man speaks truth! I am a gladiator!

THUSN. A gladiator—thou?

THUM. That's what I am? I fight
Both in the chariot and on horseback, and
Can hold my own with sickle or with net.
Ay, that I can! You just ask Glabrio!

THUSN. Arminius' son! (*hides her face in her hands; after a
pause advances towards FLAVIUS.*)

Thus then it is! Thou wilt
Not merely butcher in his mother's sight
Thusnelda's and Arminius' son, but you
Will robe him first,—base plotters as you are,—
In German garb and German arms withal,
That so you may to murder add disgrace,
And, in dishonouring Arminius' line,
Dishonour Germany, from which he sprang!
This you are bent to do, but do shall not.
The gods have set a different goal for us!
Let Cæsar order, threaten as he will,
For us a greater destiny's reserved,
And brighter, nobler far, our end shall be!

FLA. Woman, thou'rt crazed! When Cæsar gives com-
mand,

Who's he will venture to gainsay him ?

THUSN.

I !

Go tell thy lord, Thusnelda never shall,
 Robed for a holiday, go forth to see
 Her child's dishonour and her country's shame !
 And never shall this youth, Arminius' son,
 Equipped, in mockery, with his father's arms,
 Do battle in the Circus for his life !
 Never, I tell thee, never ! He is my son,
 And shall not fight—

THUM.

How ! I not fight ! Not fight !

Wilt drive me frantic ?

THUSN.

Oh ye eternal gods !

THUM. I not to fight, when Cæsar in his grace
 Has given me Këyx for my antagonist ?
 Not fight ? I craven-like to skulk at home,
 Whilst my companions in the Circus give
 The death-salute triumphantly to Cæsar ?
 Shall Këyx, Këyx point at me in scorn,
 And flout me as a faintheart and poltroon ?
 Not fight, not fight, indeed ? I'd sooner die !

FLA. (*aside*). Oh happy youth ! He does not feel his
 shame !

THUSN. Sigmar,

'Tis meet that men be brave, and thou art brave,
 And thou shalt prove thy valour too, I vow,
 On this proud Rome, right gloriously and soon ;
 Only not now ; thou shalt not waste thy strength
 And bravery on base juggling shows like these !

THUM. What names are these ? Base juggling shows ye
 gods !

When Rome puts on her festal bravery—
 When Cæsar, Senate, all the Roman knights,
 In solemn order to the Circus wend,
 Within whose vast expanse a surging sea
 Of forms and voices has since sunrise roared—
 When now at Cæsar's nod the lists are flung
 Wide open to the combatants, and straight

A silence deep as death itself succeeds ;
 And now the signal shrills, the blows fall thick—
 One presses on, the other with a jerk
 Clips his opponent's helmet in his net,
 Who struggles free, and is enmeshed again—
 Then striking now, now stricken, bleeds and reels,
 And striking bares his bosom to the foe,
 Receives his stroke, and makes an end ; and when,
 As suddenly as bursts a storm-charged cloud,
 Cheers, pealing thunder, shaking all the earth,
 Re-echo round the victor's giddy head,
 And here rain roses down, and laurels there—
 The Cæsar nods applause, and "Victor, hail !"
 Rings from a thousand tongues through all the air !
 This nothing but a base, a juggling show ?
 'Tis victory, ay, victory, glory, life !

THUSN. Thou dream'st of victory, deluded boy ;
 Thou dost not see, to kill thee is their aim,
 To avenge the father's triumph on the son.
 And thou—thou couldst—

THUM. I am resolved to fight !

THUSN. And Germany, which thou dost load with shame,
 Thy father's name, which thou dost desecrate—
 Thy mother's hopes, which thou dost turn to tears,—
 Are these all nought ? Art thou a gladiator,
 Because Rome called thee such, as such has trained thee ?
 Thou art Arminius' son, thou art a German,
 And thou art ours !

THUM. What's German, Roman ? Pshaw !
 I am a gladiator ; fighting is
 My trade ; and if on Germany's account
 Thou art ashamed of my vocation, know,
 No less blush I to bear a German name,
 To be a mere barbarian ; there ! know that !
 And here I now, once and for all, renounce
 The name and kinship of my German race !
 In Rome, Rome I was born, Rome brought me up ;
 I am—

THUSN. No more, unhappy boy, no more !

THUM. I am a Roman, Roman will remain !
And therefore get thee hence, and tell thy lord,
Thou Cæsar's messenger, that I will fight
To-morrow in the Circus, as he bids—
To conquer, if the gods vouchsafe success ;
To fall, if on my head their doom has passed ! *(Exit.)*

FLA. *(after a pause, to THUSNELDA, who stands with her face hidden in her hands).*

Thusnelda, though your hoarded rage at me
Lives onward unappeased within your heart,
From mine all wrath has vanished from this hour !
Speak of me as thou wilt, I will not blame thee ;
Plan what thou wilt, I will not stay thy hands ;
Farewell ! Though hardly thou hast dealt with me,
Distracted mother-heart, I pardon thee !

(Exit up the stage, through the principal entrance, L.)

THUSN. I knew it well ! Shame is the fruit of weakness.
I should have died ! If now my son will turn,
Renouncing his own people, to our foes,
And recklessly disgrace his father's name,
Mine is the guilt ! Yet have no fear, Arminius,
Upon thy name disgrace shall never fall ;
Not thus, not thus thy son shall make an end !

(As she turns to retire, the curtain falls.)

ACT IV.

SCENE AS IN THE PREVIOUS ACT.

*Enter MEROVIG and RAMIS through the principal entrance ;
THUSNELDA, coming through a side-door (R.), meets them.*

THUSN. Right welcome, Merovig ! You've kept your word,

And come most opportunely ; oh, if only
The gods would make your coming turn to good !

MER. I hope they purpose so ; 'tis good I bring ;
I bring glad tidings of deliverance.

This very night our faithful band shall break
Into these walls, to carry you away !
The guards are all won over, horses near
To carry us in flight across the plains.
And once the Apennines are reached—

THUSN. Enough !

Too much ! Before we think of harvesting,
Let us be certain that the seed is sown !

MER. There's something in thy look, so calm, so sad !
Can that be true, which Ramis told me of ?
He would not yield to thee ; he would remain,
What Rome has made of him, a gladiator !

RAM. Yes, with our foes he sides ! In Roman hands
He has grown Roman !

THUSN. No ! He is German still,
In every heart-beat, every drop of blood
True German ! German constancy it is
He clings to Rome with, for Rome brought him up ;
German the courage urges him to fight,

German the whim that will be anything
Rather than German ! Yes, he is a German,
And just because he is one, that is why—

THUM. (*is heard without*). Io Bacchus ! Fill high,
Lycisca !

THUSN. (*shuddering*). His voice !
How ! drinking-songs and clink of cups !

RAM. Just so !
Arminius' son holds revel, shouts and swills,
And lolls on downy pillows, with full cups,
His girl upon his breast !

THUSN. Let him swill on !
Let his impulsive nature, wild, untamed,
Break like the ocean's billows on the shore.
Let all the flower-blooms from the tree of life
Come showering to the ground, and all at once ;
Let youth's fresh springs steam out in bubbling jets,
'Tis fermentation ripens noble wine !

MER. Ay, were it manly force, not boyish folly,
Were it true vigour, bubbling over, not
Mere feebleness, that wallows in the mire ;
For where the spirit soars not, hope is vain !

THUSN. You're wroth with him, misjudge him, both of
you !

And wherefore are you wroth ? Because at first
He treated me so rudely ? Think ! He is
A gladiator, and, as such, is he
Not bound to fight, and triumph if he can ?
Then, was it strange, he broke into a rage ?
Or would not sacrifice the things he prized,
When scorn was all I offered him instead ?
But when your purpose is unveiled, and he
Is shown a people,—nay, a host of peoples,
All Germany,—sworn in fealty to his flag,
When I appeal to him to do great deeds,—
The meanest sure of immortality,—
Then from his eyes the blinding scales will fall—
For man grows greater with a great career—

Then will he feel, both who and what he is—

LYCISCA *is heard singing without, to the accompaniment of a lute—*

*“ Burning kisses, spicy wine !
Now the grape’s red blood to sip,
Now the purple of thy lip !
Burning kisses, spicy wine
Make a mortal half divine ! ”*

THUMELICUS *is heard singing in chorus—*

“ Make a mortal half divine ! ”

Io, Bacchus, Io !

THUSN. *(aside)*. Woe’s me ! These sounds have sent
A chill into my heart ! Oh, if false Rome
So wholly has enervated his soul,
So through and through envenomed all his heart,—
No, come what may, whate’er the hours may bring,
Not by my son shall Germany be shamed !

MER. *(after a pause)*. Time presses ! We must settle on
our course.

THUSN. Ramis ! go call my son to me ! And look
About, that no one plays the spy on us ! *(Exit RAMIS, L.H.)*

MER. I could have wished thou hadst not until now
Concealed from him the object brought me here !
The games come off to-morrow ; instant flight
Alone can save him ; should he hesitate,
Turn a deaf ear to all that we can urge—

THUSN. The heavens, I hope, will smile upon our task !

MER. Hope, say’st thou ? then thou fearest ! Not till hope
Abandons men, do they appeal to heaven ;
And didst thou really in thy son believe—

THUSN. I in the gods believe, and, come what will,
I will not hold my country’s cause for lost !—
He’s here ! Quick ! Step aside !

THUM. *(entering with RAMIS, L.)* The pestilence
Gnaw up thy bones ! I am to come ! Old hag,
And where am I to come to, and to whom ?

RAM. There is thy mother, let her answer thee !

THUSN. Come nearer, Sigmar !

THUM. Now, what is it ? Speak !

But, pray you, make it short ! I have some guests,

Or rather, I'm invited as a guest,

Or, better still, I'm being entertained !

What is it ? Speak !

THUSN. My son, look up, and see

The man there !

THUM. Him ! Him yonder ! Rare, oh rare !

The bearskin and the helm with vulture wings—

Ay ! now I comprehend ! (*going up to MEROVIG and surveying him all round.*) Handsome, by Jove !

Sits famously, and yet true German !

THUSN. How !

Hast lost thy wits ? For whom tak'st thou this man ?

THUM. The man there ? Why, whom should I take him for,

But some one whom the Cæsar has sent here,

To let me see him in the dress which I

To-morrow in the Circus am to wear ?

THUSN. Unworthy error, shameful as the life
Which Rome has made thee lead ! Deluded boy,
Know, 'tis thy father's brother-in-arms, whom there
Thou seest before thee, who to reach thee took
Service in Rome's Teutonic Cohort ; he,
He is the help that Germany sends thee, he
Is thy deliverer.

MER. And what's more than all,
A true friend, even as to thy sire he was !

THUM. A friend, deliverer ! What stuff you talk !

MER. My prince !—for such, after thy father's death,
It seem'st to us Cherusicans meet to call thee—

My prince, I am sent by Germany, and she calls
To thee through me : " Up ! think upon the shame
That I have suffered in Arminius' line ;

Son of a hero, grasp thy father's sword,

And, in avenging them, avenge thy native land ! "

THUSN. Dost comprehend, my son ? They call to thee,

The tribes that dwell 'twixt Danube and the Rhine,
On from the Spessart to Carpathia's hills,
'Tis all vast Germany that calls to thee !
Up ! the cry echoes like a thunder-peal,
Swords clash, and trumpets mingle with the call,
"Up, up, Arminius' son ! avenge thyself,
And, doing that, avenge, avenge us all !"

MER. The princes, with the peoples, wait for thee.
Stand forth among them ! Only lift thy hand,
One glance from thee, and they are up in arms !
To work, then ! We must fly this very night.

THUM. Has the wine got into my brain, and set
It spinning round—or are you mad ? I fly,
I rouse the tribes of Germany to arms !

THUSN. Dost quail ? Thou say'st thou art a gladiator,
And fighting thy vocation ; now then, show
What thou canst do ! Let Rome—this haughty Rome,
That, under all its ivory and gold
Which charm thee, is but crumbling rottenness ;
This vast imperial Rome, that bends beneath
A madman's rule ; Rome, that no more believes
In its gods, or in itself ; Rome, that has held
Us both in chains, made thee a gladiator,
And now is bent on murdering thee,—let Rome
Be thy antagonist, strike home at her,
Down with her to the dust ! Rome, vanquish Rome !

THUM. Pahaw ! Ask me to fetch down the moon from heaven !
'Twere just as easy. Who e'er vanquished Rome ?

MER. We smote her in the Teutoburger Forest !

THUSN. How ! deem'st thou us too weak ? Then follow us,
Come to our forests ! Learn there to be free,
And to prize freedom ; there see justice rule—
Not mere caprice as here—and truth,—here all
Is treachery and lies ! There ripen to
A man 'mongst men ; feel, comprehend, that we
Are now what these around us here were once,
And hurl Rome down,—for ours, ours is the world !

THUM. And wherefore Rome ? What ill has Rome e'er done

To me, or Germany what good, that I
For Germany should fall to feud with Rome?
What's Germany to me?

THUSN. How, boy! the land
For which thy father bled—the land in which
Thou’rt born to empire, a Cherusean prince!
Dost thou renounce thy birthright?

MER. Can it be?
How! Shut thine eyes when thy home beckons thee;
Close up thine ears when she, thy mother, calls!
Thou canst, thou wilt not—

THUM. Wherefore can I not ?
If Germany, my mother, as you say,
Through twenty years took neither thought of me,
Nor of her there, that was Arminius' wife,
Why, in the name of all the gods, should I
Not turn my back upon this raven mother ?
What's Germany to me, I ask again ?
I am no German, no Cheruscan prince ;
I was, and am, and ever will remain,
Thumelicus, the gladiator of Ravenna.

THUSN. (*after a pause, turning to MEROVIG*). Speak thou to him—I have no more to say.

MER. Were I a man that in a splash of words
Forgets the core of things, by Thor's sledge-hammer
Home would I go, and leave thee here to be
A gladiator to thy heart's content !
But thou'rt Arminius' son, the only man
Might fuse our German forces into one ;
And therefore I still tarry, and implore,
Do not, because thou'rt wroth with Germany,
Forget thyself, but, for thine own sake, do
What thou'dst not do for us ! We offer thee
An army, power, command, to win for thee
The purple of the Cæsar's ! Do not spurn
What ne'er will come again ! Become our chief,
And Rome obeys thee, and the world is thine !

THUM. Power and command !—The purple of the Cæsars !

Why, that's worth listening to, and, sooth to say,
 I'll think about it. For to-day, enough !
 Now I must go. We shall speak more of this
 Some fitter time. To-morrow, or—

MER. To-morrow ?

Does not to-morrow find you in the lists,
 And shouldst thou—

THUM. Fall ? that's what you mean ? No, no ;
 Conquer I must, and shall !

MER. Fool ! If thou didst,
 Dost thou suppose thou then shouldst have a choice ?
 Dost fondly fancy, Germany would e'er
 Choose for her people's leader him who fought,
 Dishonourably fought, a serf with serfs,—
 The man to whom the populace of Rome
 Flung chaplets in the Circus ? Choose to-day,
 Choose now or never ! Later 'tis too late !

THUM. Dishonourably ! How ! Dishonourably ! All
 Because I am a gladiator ! I !
 And for you Germans, who with folded hands
 Have calmly let me grow to what I am—
 Is not Aurelian a Roman knight ?
 Valens a military tribune now ?
 And what were these but gladiators too ?—
 And I, by you barbarians, savages,
 Am to be scouted as dishonourable ?
 Well, then, give ear, and mark me once for all !
 Never will I the Germans' leader be !
 Though ye for me should win the universe,
 Though Germany lay imploring at my feet—

THUSN. (*waving back MEROVIG, who has advanced in violent
 emotion*). Stay ! Germany never did, nor ever shall,
 Lie at the foot of any he that lives,
 To beg of him to be her lord and chief !
 Never shall Germany entreat ! But I,
 Thy mother, I beseech thee, O my son—
 I, that in sorrow brought thee forth, in grief
 Did suckle thee, and in despair's dark hour

Did lose thee—I, my son, implore thee now,
 Make not the day that gave thee back to me
 More bitter than the day that saw my loss !
 Betray me not, my dearest, fondest hope ;
 Spare me the last, the deadliest of pangs !
 Oh, let me not survive my only child !
 For, fight to-morrow, fall away from us,
 And from that hour thou to my heart art dead !
 Far sooner would I see thee cold and stark,
 A gashed and mangled corpse, than that thy head,
 At once dishonoured and with victory crowned,
 Should bear aloft the gladiator's wreath !

*(After a pause, approaches THUMELICUS,
 who stands with his face averted.)*

Thou'rt wroth, my son ! Yet wroth thou shouldst not be
 With me ! I lived for thee, ay, lived when death
 Offered me fame and freedom ; then live now
 For me ! Repay the sacrifice I made !
 Thou wear'st thy father's lineaments,—belie
 Them not ! Fair art thou, be in soul as fair !
 Be thou a man, no gladiator churl ;
 And as thy birth proclaims thee for our own,
 Be ours indeed ! Come ! *(Seizing his hand.)*
 'Twas denied to me,

To lead the feeble footsteps of the boy,
 Now let me be the guide unto the man !
 Come, Sigmar, come !

THUM. *(spurning her hand)*. No, no ! I tell thee, no !

THUSN. Go, then !

THUM. I will ! Call me not back again,
 Nor hope to make me change, no, not one jot,
 For what I've said I've said for good and all !

(Exit by the side-door, L.)

MER. *(after a pause, approaching THUSNELDA)*. Thusnelda !

THUSN. Go thou too !

MER. Not without thee !
 He chooses his own fate, then let him have it,
 The rattle of his chains to him is music ;

But thou, whose soul has need of liberty,
Come with me to thy people, to thy home !

THUSN. Speak not of me ! A grave is all I need !
Save him, my son ! To-night break with thy friends
Into the house here,—carry him away
With your strong thews and sinews ; set him free
By force !

MER. Who ever was made free by force ?
Who would be free, must long for freedom, and
A slave in soul's a slave where'er he be !

THUSN. Dost by Arminius' son refuse to stand ?

MER. By his son, no ! by the gladiator, yes !
To take him with me, were to carry home
Poison, not healing,—not the tie to bind,
Rather the knife to sever ! Let me lead
Thee with me homewards, be it mine to show
Thy countenance to those that waver still—

THUSN. No ! Do thy duty, leave me to do mine !
Here I remain. Away ! But, back at home,
Tell them, whilst they in council sat, and paused
And pondered, a most noble spirit here
In slavery's stress and thralldom dire was wrecked !
Tell them, they came to a resolve too late,
And warn them, lest this same "Too late ! Too late !"
Prove through all after-time our country's curse !
Not one word more ! Go ! Leave me !

MER. I obey !
(*Exit up the stage, L.*)

THUSN. He's gone !—I hear his tread—and now all, all
Is over ! He will fight to-morrow, fall
And die, unto his own eternal shame,
Blurring his sire's and country's honour both !
Am I to look on calmly ? Let him sink,
Till I have tried my uttermost to save him ?
Yet what to do ? Appeal to Flavius ? No !
From treason what but mischief can ensue ?
Ye eternal gods, to you I call for aid !
Night lies upon my path, mist clouds mine eyes,

**My brain is paralysed ; one only thought
Burns like a fire deep down within my soul ;
My son shall never be his country's shame !**

LYCISCA (*heard singing without*).



*"Burning kisses, spicy wine,
Juice of grape, and mingling kisses
Fire the blood with twofold blisses ;
Burning kisses, spicy wine
Make a mortal half divine !"*

THUMELICUS (*also heard without*).

"Make a mortal half divine!"

Io, Bacchus, Io !

THUSN. Ye eternal gods !

Yes ! In these sounds ye answer to my call !

Love holds him fast, and love must rescue him.

I must ally myself with her! Woe's me!

I am to—I, Thusnelda—oh, proud heart,

Dost quail? Imperious spirit, that scarce bowed

Even to the gods themselves, dost thou rebel?

Thou wouldst recoil, resist?—ah, learn to stoop!

Thy son's life's in the balance ! Learn to beg,

To kneel, and all thy shame be this, that thou

Didst for a moment shrink from such abasement.

Enter LYCISCA from the side-door, L., speaking back into the room she has left.

Lyc. That must do for to-day ! To-morrow more !

You shan't come with me ! Stay ! I'll shut you in !

THUSN. (*going up to her*). Grant me a single word before
you go !

LYC. You, is it? Here's a joke! What! speak to me!

THUSN. Speak to thee? Ay, beseech thee! Howsoe'er

Unused to such a thing—I will beseech thee !

Lyc. Me ! beseech me ! You, you a princess, me ?

THUSN. If my pride has offended thee, the gods,

Thou seest, have avenged thee—Then be warned

By my example—Meet me kindly, gently,
And hear with pity what a mother's heart
Cries out in its despair! Oh save my son!

LYC. How! Save thy son? Can I believe my ears?

THUSN. The games are near; to-morrow is too late.
Let him not tread the Circus' hateful sand!

Your tears I know he never will resist—
He will obey, if you conjure him, you,
To fly, this very day, this very night!
In vain a future, noble, crowned with fame,
Awaits him in the mother-arms of home;
He spurns the happiness awaits him there!
Teach him to comprehend it, feel it; use
Thy influence—he loves thee, loves but thee!

LYC. His, his a future noble, crowned with fame?

THUSN. Escape with us, and share his destiny!
There thou shalt lord it, rule as princess; here
Thou art a slave! His welfare, life's at stake—
If thou dost love him, save him then, oh save him!

LYC. (*deeply moved, and half aside*). Oh, if 'twere possible!

Were there a way

Out of the depths of my degraded lot!
I lord it, I to rule as princess there,
Cast off my old life, and forget my shame?
Forget it? Can the world, can I myself
Forget what has been? What all men have known,
Can that be hid? Impossible! No, no!

THUSN. Thou doubttest? Do not doubt! I pray to thee,
As to the gods themselves! A gentle smile
To tell me that thou wilt! Thou must, thou must!

LYC. My heart aches for thee! How am I to say,
What must be hard, how soft soe'er my words?
In sooth, I dare not. Shall I? Yes, I must
Speak out! Thy hope is but a dream, thy prayer
Impossibility. Ah, not for me,
Nor for thy son, is rescue possible!

THUSN. No rescue possible! When even now

All's ready for our flight, true friends at hand
To bear us home? No, no, I do not dream;
'Tis but thy fear. Nothing's impossible
To woman's love, or to a man's resolve!

LYC. Ay, there, deluded one, the mischief lies!
I am no woman, a poor flower-girl I.
We love not, neither are we loved! And he!
He is a gladiator, not a man;
The scourge instructed him; he can obey,
But not resolve. Whate'er the destiny
His home may offer, glorious and pure,
He lacks the eye that sees at once what's right,
The soul that presses forward, the staunch heart
That never flags till it achieves its task!
And I—enough of words! Learn this; she, who
Has sunk like me, can only—go on sinking!
THUSN. Art sunk with shame? Well, then, revenge thy-
self!

Is thy life flecked with spots? then wash them off
With Roman blood! The weapons are prepared,
And hosts stand ready to obey thy nod!
Come, follow us; save—save my son, and Rome
Shall pay thee for the wrongs she wrought on thee.

LYC. Say, can revenge give back what I have lost?
And you barbarians, would you scorn me less
Than do the sons of Rome? No, no. If e'er
It be decreed by fate that I shall rule,
'Tis here in Rome, not in your forest shades;
And if shame be my lot, at least Rome proffers
The bitter potion in a golden bowl.

THUSN. And he—my son!—who, who shall save my son?
Of all that live on earth, thou only canst.
Look on my sorrow, let a mother's prayers
Subdue thee—else I must—yes, yes, I must!
(*Falls at her feet.*) Behold me here a suppliant at thy feet!
Have pity on me! Pity! Do not leave
The last shoot of a noble stem distraught,

To perish in the Circus like a beast.

LYC. Stand up! Keel not to me! It nor beseems
Thyself nor touches me! Be not alarmed.

No word shall 'scape my lips of what thou'st said.

Nay, more! Secure his freedom, if thou canst,

And take him home; but hope no aid from me.

If Fate shall seize on thee with ruthless hands,

And drag thee down into the mire of woe,

As though thou hadst been born in it, like us,

I will not aid, yet will I not prevent!

Even misery yearns for fellowship, and if

To sink must be my doom, drown thou as well!

(Exit up the stage, L.)

THUSN. Lost, lost, all lost, beyond retrieval lost!

No mind to counsel, and no hand to aid!

Yes, she-wolf Rome, thou hast us in thy gripe;

The soul, that did not stifle in thy chains,

Perverts to poison underneath thy yoke.

Thou mak'st thy myrmidons of those who are

Worthless as slaves, so chainest down them all!

Woe's me, a woman wofully accursed,

Who in her bosom bore my country's shame!

Woe, that I brought her blight into the world!

Oh that the wheels of time would roll back, back,

Year after year, day after day, until

That hour should come again, the hour when I

Dropped, as I stood before Germanicus,

The hand was raised against myself, because

I found a second life within me stir.

Oh, were that hour but given to me again!

RAMIS *(enters from the back, L., with a wreath of oak-leaves,
and carrying a purple mantle on her arm).*

A slave of Cæsar's met me at the gate

And asked—Thusnelda, dost thou hear?

THUSN.

What is it?

RAM. Know, then, a slave of Cæsar's asked for thee,

And bade me take to thee this oaken wreath

And purple robe! 'Tis Caesar's wish thou shouldst
Appear to-morrow in the Circus games
Arrayed in them!

THUSN. The Cæsar wishes that!

RAM. Thou art, so said the slave, on no account
To come without the wreath of oaken leaves;
For Cæsar wishes every eye should view
Germania personified in thee;
Therefore the oak-leaves must not be forgot!

THUSN. I am to be Germania?

RAM. So he said.

THUS. Oh that in sooth I were Germania,
With all Germania's courage in my soul,
With all Germania's anger in mine eye,
And all her giant vigour in mine arm!
Then, craven-hearted Rome, then shouldst thou quake
Down to the core of the sustaining earth!
Then—hark! Who speaks? What voice rings in my ears?
Or does it speak within me? "Up! accept
Germania's wreath, and do what she would do
To keep its noble leaves unstained and pure!
The wheels of time thou fain wouldst backwards roll?
Well, then, we give that day to thee again,
And see thou use it better than before!"

(Puts out her hand to take the wreath.)

Germania I will be! Give me the wreath!
(Recoils.) No, hence! The leaves are bloody. Hence!

RAM. It is

**The reflex of the purple cloak, Thusnelda!
What ails thee? Calm thyself!**

THUSN. Be still, my heart,

And summon all thy strength, world-weary soul!—
How ran the vow, which to the gods I made,
So they vouchsafed to place some high behest,
Some task of mighty import in my hands?
“I will fulfil it!” yes, these were my words—
I will fulfil it; and, if fail I may,

I'll break, as breaks the oak before the blast,
But bend I will not, ever! So it was!

(Seizing the wreath and placing it on her head.)

Come then, Germania's wreath, and rustle here

A Teutoburger Forest round my brows!

RAM. What is thy purpose? Speak!

THUSN.

To keep my word!

(As she goes out with RAMIS, the curtain falls.)

ACT V.

Scene same as in previous Act. In the foreground, R., a couch, with the head of it so placed that any one lying on it looks towards the back of the stage; over the lower end of it a green coverlet has been thrown, and a pole fixed, upon which a kind of trophy, composed of various pieces of armour, a helmet with vulture's wings, a shield decorated with bosses, a short sword, and a bearskin, are being arranged by slaves under GLABRIO'S direction.

GLABRIO. Set up the helmet here above the shield!
Now here the sword! That's right! quite right! And now
We're ready! So be off, and look you, see
That all's kept quiet, that no sudden noise
Can find its way into the chamber here,
And scare him from the sleep he needs so much!
These are your orders, so away and mind them!

(As the slaves retire, contemplating the trophy.)

Faith, a fine suit of arms! Clumsy a bit,
No doubt, and heavy, showy though, and quaint,
Just what your young fools like! I'm pretty sure,
They'll please his fancy: but time's running on,
The hour appointed for the games is near!
Where is the youngster loitering?

(Sees LYCISCA, who enters from the side-door, L.)

Here she comes,

My purple rose-bud! Well, how goes it on?
What, since I left him, has he been about?

LYC. He had a bath, then breakfasted—

GLAB.

And now?

LYC. Anoints himself, and puts his hair all straight.

GLAB. But what condition is he in? I mean,

How does he look and talk and bear himself ?

LYC. Oh, brisk, as he were going to a dance !

GLAB. A fine young fellow that ! In very sooth,
It almost makes me sad—

LYC. That Diodorus
Is chosen for his antagonist ? Does that
Still hold ?

GLAB. It does ! and Diodorus has
His orders not to spare him.

LYC. Then his death
Is certain, eh ?

GLAB. His death ? Why, who knows that ?

LYC. You know it well !

GLAB. Tush, child ! don't fret.

LYC. Me fret !

Alas ! I feel that I should envy him !

GLAB. What's this, wench ? Envy him ! What nonsense !
Yet

You look quite pale ; you're feverish, you are ill—

LYC. In truth, I know not what's come over me !

It very often happens with me, that
I tumble from a state of mad delight
Heels over head into the deadliest dumps,
And hug to-day what yesterday I spurned.
Mere idle fancies !

GLAB. Ay, wench, nothing more !
Begot of stagnant blood and heated liver !
I'll send for Simon, the old Jew, and he
Will put you straight ! But see, here comes the lad !
So, then, be off ; he must not meet you now !
You're out of sorts, and seeing you might damp
His spirits ! Go, child, to the market-place,
And there see to your flowers !

LYC. See to my flowers !
You're right ! What boots to swim, no shore in view ?
No, better sink, and in the whelming flood
Find quiet and a long forgetfulness !

(Exit up the stage, L.)

GLAB. What's in the wench's head? Is her heart touched
By the young fellow really? Pah! she has
No heart! Yet what else can it be? Humph! What
But silly youth that, overjoyed for nought,
Frets for mere nought, and is with nought appeased?
She'll be herself again ere eventide!

*Enter THUMELICUS from the side-door, L., in a short tunic, his
arms bare almost to the shoulders, with the sword of AR-
MINIUS at his girdle.*

THUM. Here I am, Glabrio!

GLAB. And high time too!
The fight will soon be on, and you, my boy,
Must rest a bit, and get your strength well up!
You know the saw—

*"Swordsman, rest before the fight,
Then you strike with triple might."*

THUM. Oh yes, I know it!

GLAB. Act upon it, then!
There in your little room it is too close,
So I have had a couch placed for you here;
Here it is cool, and yonder curtain, see,
Will keep the sun from striking on your eyes!

THUM. Thanks, thanks, good Glabrio!

GLAB. And just look here!
I've had your weapons carefully laid out.
How do you like them, eh? The skin, the casque,
With vulture's wings; ha! don't it flash and gleam?
Why, you'll look like the God of War himself!

THUM. Oh, German arms! Again this mockery! Well!
Of the bear's claws ye wolves had best beware!

GLAB. Right! give it them well home! For every word
Deal out a swashing blow! Right, right, my lad!
Now make yourself quite comfortable! Come,
Unloose your belt. Why do you lug about
This clumsy whinger? Sure, you never dream
Of entering the arena, man, with that?

THUM. My mother thought—

GLAB. Pah ! Let your mother think !
That short blade will not do !

(Takes off the sword and lays it on the couch.)

Away with it !

And now to sleep, to sleep ! I'll wake you up,
And arm you, when they come.

THUM. Come ! When they come !

And who are coming, then ?

GLAB. Who coming ? Why,

Who but the Cæsar, who in person means
To come and fetch your mother and yourself,
And to the Circus to conduct you both
With festal music, and in solemn state.

THUM. Cæsar himself ?

GLAB. Himself ! Never before
To gladiator was such favour shown ;
So in the Circus prove you merit it !

THUM. That will I, never fear !

GLAB. I've stinted you

Neither in sturdy blows nor good advice,
So, hark you, do me credit now ! Be cool
And confident. To feel that you will win
Is half the victory. Watch your opponent's eye,
See what he means, before he stirs his hand—

THUM. I know, I know !

GLAB. Just one thing more !

THUM. What's that ?

GLAB. When falling—understand me right, you won't,
But it might chance,—in falling, should you feel
Yourself hard hit—a serious wound—remember
To drop on your left knee, your left knee, mind,
And, stretching out your right leg, mark me, thus,
Let your left arm upon your body rest,
And, bending back with a fine showy grace,
Await the final stroke.

THUM. Make your mind easy !

Oh, I know all the business !

GLAB. Good, then, good !
 So farewell for the present ! I must hence,
 To see about the others ! Now lie down,
 And rest till I return.

THUM. If you see Këyx,
 Who's chosen, I know, for my antagonist—

GLAB. And you know that ?

THUM. If you should see the cur,
 Tell him to do his very best to-day,
 For, best or worse, this day shall be his last !

GLAB. *(as he is going out, and closing the curtain across the principal entrance).*

Good ! He shall have your message ! Lie you down.
 Tut, tut, be quick ! I'll wake you in good time !

(Exit behind the curtain.)

THUM. A little snatch of sleep ! And wherefore not ?
 A few brief winks can do no harm ; last night
 I could not sleep for thinking of the games !

(Sits down upon the couch, and leans his head upon his hand.)

How evenly my life has passed till now !
 The fighting-school, sound whippings, now and then
 A scrap of praise, mutton to eat at noon,
 So one day glided by,—so thousands did !
 And now in some few hours how much has chanced !
 Këyx's lies, the jeers of my companions,
 The coming fight for life, that messenger
 From Germany, and now the Cæsar's self
 Who takes us to the games ! My head is all
 A-spin ! And this is why I was so harsh,
 So savage to my mother ! Oh, I do
 So long to get some rest ! the day is hot,
 And thinking makes one drowsy—
(Observes THUSNELDA, who appears at the side-door, in a white robe, with a purple mantle, and an oak wreath in her hair ; he springs up, and advances to her.)

Ha ! see there !

'Tis thou ! I did not hear thee come, but thou

Art come, I think, to herald my success,
For, as the song says, Joy comes light of foot,
And Bliss is winged with air !

THUSN. 'Tis winged indeed !

THUM. How beautiful thou art ! How stately shows
Thy wreath ! how brilliantly the purple flames !
These trappings are well timed, for Cæsar's self
Intends to lead us to the games in state.
We must not shame him, must we ?

THUSN. Nor ourselves.

THUM. These are the weapons, see, I am to wear !

THUSN. Oh, speak not of the future as 'twere past ;
The future to the gods pertains !

THUM. One word.

I am, so Glabrio says, to keep quite quiet,
But first all must be clear between us. You
Are wroth with me, I see, for yesterday ;
You're wroth, because we follow different roads,
Because what I have been I must remain !
Nay, be not wroth ! Thy counsel may be wise,
Thy road the better one ; but can I therefore
Walk in it ? can I be what I am not ?
Were I the man for these great schemes of yours,
No doubt I'd feel the impulse for them too.
I don't ! A gladiator I will be,
The foremost of my peers, and of the time.
Worthy of thee, I'll prove myself as such ;
And, let him try his utmost, can a man
Be better or more perfect than he is ?
So pardon, not *what* yesterday I said,
But *how* I said it ; that which I've resolved,
I cannot help, so therefore hate me not !

THUSN. Hate thee ! This heart can wither in its woe,
It can despair, can nourish murderous thoughts—
But hate thee—hate my child ! Eternal gods,
Ye witness if I hate him !

THUM. That's all right,
So let my fortune find me my own way ;

The thing that is, it is ; the gods so will it.

THUSN. Can nothing, nothing turn or hold thee back ?
Is, then, thy purpose fixed to fight to-day ?

THUM. How often must I tell you ? I will fight !

THUSN. The future to the gods pertains ! Proceed !

THUM. Resign yourself to the inevitable,
And be no longer wroth ! Give me your hand,
Let us not part in anger.

THUSN. Part ! No, no ;
We go the self-same road. Not in farewell,
But as thy guide I give my hand to thee,
As thy companion kiss thee, to my heart
Enfold thee, and if e'er a blessing lay
In tears, such blessing overflows thee now.
Why was I doomed, ye gods, to lose him ? Why,
Lost for so long, to find him thus again ?

(Pushing him from her.)

Enough ! Away !

THUM. I understand you not,
And never shall, I fancy ! But the time
Is slipping by, and I must rest ! I need it !

(Flings himself upon the couch.)

Oh, yet there's something ! Keep my sword for me !

THUSN. Arminius' sword ? Thou givest it me thyself ?

THUM. You'll keep it for me, eh ? for Glabrio vows
It's quite unfit for the arena !

THUSN. For
The arena—yes, for that 'tis quite unfit.

THUM. *(pointing to the sword upon the couch).* Here 'tis,
and mind you take good care of it.

And now, I've nothing more to say. *(Letting his head drop.)*
Sleep, sleep,

Now take me hence !

THUSN. *(turning away).* Ay, sleep, sleep !

THUM. Going ? How !
No, stay, you don't disturb me ! Stay, and if
You know a song, a pretty one, you may
Sing me to sleep.

THUSN. I know no songs !

THUM. Have you
Forgotten them ? You knew some well of old !
Upon my eyelids hangs a weight of lead.
How ran that song, Lycisca, yesterday ?—

“ *Burning kisses—spicy wine—
Juice of grape—and mingling kisses—
Burning kisses—all divine—* ” (Falls asleep.)

THUSN. (after a pause, returns to the side of the couch). The
hour's at hand, and what is to be done
Must be done now ! He sleeps ! How sweet, how still !
How often has he lain on this same spot,
A rosy infant on my breast, whilst I
Have lulled his sleep, and covered up his face
When the chill night-winds swept along these halls,
And if a fly came I have brushed it off,
And waked him if ill dreams disturbed his sleep !
And now I stand beside him threatening ill,
My hand uplifted, and my purpose steeled
To cut him off in his youth's perfect bloom,
Even as a withered bough from the tree of life !
The wild beast of the woods fights for her young,
The snake bites if you pluck the rose away,
And I—Yes, I will kill the innocent sleep ;
I, I, a mother, murder my own child !

(Rushes to the front of the stage.)

No, no, ye righteous gods ! Give back my vow—
I cannot pay it—give it me again !
I cannot, where I gave, take life away,
Nor murder, murder, where I'm bound to love !

(After a pause, returns to the couch.)

Whither, perturbed spirit, dost thou stray ?
What would I now, but, as in that old time,
To shield thee from the winter frost of life,
To wake thee from existence' troublous dream,
To guard thee from the fly-swarm of the passions,
Which come to all men, even the happiest ?
What but to shield thee from the deathblow, dealt

By a vile butcher's mercenary hands ?
 No, Sigmar, no !—If that this trembling hand
 (Seizes the sword, which is lying on the couch.)
 Strikes to thy heart, it is not hatred ; no,
 'Tis love, ay, love, that little reck's to ask
 How bitter is the potion, so it save,
 And therefore—

(Raises the sword to strike, but recoils, and lets it fall.)

 No ! I cannot !

*(Drops on her knees, while music is heard at a distance of
 a gay Festival March, which gradually comes nearer.)*

 Ye eternal gods !

If for my country's weal ye claim his life,
 Then take it ! Let the atmosphere he breathes
 Be turned to poison ; bid the earth to quake,
 That these walls toppling may entomb us both ;
 Blast us to ashes with your lightning's fires !
 The power is yours ! Accomplish your high wills !
 But in my hands place not his destiny,
 Demand not from the mother her son's blood !

(Listens, and then starts up.)

Hark ! what was that ? If mine ear cheats me not,
 'Tis music ! 'Tis—it is Caligula.
 They come to fetch him. The thronged Circus heaves
 And roars ! Rome claims her gladiator, but
 I will not give him up. I am a woman,
 Helpless and weak, but will not give him up.
 See ! who shall tear him from me ? *(Snatches up the sword.)*

 If, ye gods

That dwell on high, ye will not launch your bolts,
 So be it, then I will guard my country's honour !
 Sport on, sport on in revelry and mirth !
 Around my brows the oaken chaplet stirs,
 I am Arminius' wife—a German, I,—
 And these I was before I was a mother.
 You claim Thumelicus, the gladiator ?
 Sigmar, my son is called, mine, mine he is,
 And mine he shall remain unto the last.

Here with this blow I strike his fetters off ! *(Stabs him.)*

THUM. Woe's me !—that Këyx—Mother—

(Falls back and dies.)

THUSN.

O my child !

*(Veils her face in her mantle with her left hand ;
her right drops, holding the sword.)*

GLAB. *(without.)* Up, up, Thumelicus ! *(Throwing back the
curtain.)* Wake up, my lad !

(Enters.) They're coming—it is time ! *(Advancing and taking
down the helmet from the trophy.)* Be quick, be quick !

Get on your weapons !—How, he does not hear !

Shake him up, woman, will you, till he wakes !

(THUSNELDA remains as before.)

Ha ! are you both deaf, you ? Must I myself

Rouse up the youngster ?

*(Advances to the right side of the couch,
and takes hold of THUMELICUS.)*

Up, old fellow ! How—

Is't possible ? *(Dropping the helmet.)* Blood !

(Rushing towards the principal entrance.)

Help, ho ! Come hither ! Help !

*(Returns, bends over THUMELICUS, while guards,
gladiators, and slaves rush in at the back.)*

APEX. What's up ?

GNIPHO. You called for us ?

KëYX. What is the matter, speak ?

GLAB. In vain ! Life utterly extinct ! He's gone !

*Enter FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, followed by CASSIUS and several
senators and knights.*

FLA. Who was it called for help ?

CASS. What's gone amiss ?

GLAB. Look for yourselves, and judge ! There he lies dead,
My handsome gladiator dead !

FLA. Sigmar !

Arminius' son !

GLAB. Slain, treacherously slain !

CASS. And who has slain him ?

*Enter MARCIUS in the background with GALLUS, preceding
CALIGULA.*

MAR. Make way, there ! Room, room !

GALL. Room for the Cæsar !

*Enter CALIGULA in festal array, a wreath of roses on his head,
leading CÆSONIA by the hand, attended by PISO, VALERIUS,
and other senators and knights.*

CALIG. Is all Rome gone mad ?

Why do the people stare, and block the way ?

Why has the music stopped ? I charge you, speak !

What is the matter here ? Who is that youth ?

Now, by mine anger, answer me !

GLAB. My lord,

He, lying in his blood there, is Thumelicus,

My finest gladiator.

CÆS. How ! Thumelicus !

CALIG. Arminius' son, that to my palate was

What gave these games their zest ! Knave, is it thus

You keep my gladiators in your charge ?

GLAB. I'm innocent, my lord !

CALIG. Who's guilty, then ?

Who was it struck him down ?

THUSN. *(who till now has stood veiled and immovable, letting
her mantle drop).* 'Twas I that did it !

FLA. Oh my prophetic spirit !

CALIG. How ! Thusnelda !

Thou—thou hast taken thy son's life ? And why ?

THUSN. Why ? Know'st thou not ? Well, I will tell thee
why !

In two poor prisoners—a woman and

A gladiator—thou didst think to make

Triumphant mockery of my native land,

And from safe distance here to put to shame

Arminius' people in his kith and kin !
 I was to play Germania, such thy thought,
 And see my son struck down before my eyes ;
 But I, though shocked and shuddering the while,
 I did not play, I *was* Germania !
 My son must never taint his mother's name,
 His sire's renown, the honour of our home.
 I offered up, I, with a priestess' hands,
 His youth a sacrifice to our dread gods !
 My people's honour I was bound to save.
 I am a woman, weak, and held in chains ;
 And therefore, Cæsar, therefore slew I him !

CALIG. (*whilst FLAVIUS, who has hitherto been looking on in deep emotion, suddenly leaves the stage*).

It was to spite me, then ! Thou dust, thou worm,
 Didst dream to spoil this festival of mine ?
 Then tremble, for I yet will have my sport—
 Have it in thee, now that thy son is gone !

THUSN. Let those who fear thee tremble ! My fear died
 With him there ! Rather tremble thou, ay, thou,
 Outwitted by a woman, lest the scent
 Of blood so noble, wafted o'er the Alps,
 Arouse the men who scattered Varus' hosts !
 And if thy purblind soul quail not to man,
 Then quail before the gods, for here I lay
 My hand in prayer on my son's head, and call
 To those, the blest, who yonder throne in light,
 And those who rule the shades of gloom below ;
 These I implore to look down on my pangs,
 To see how the caprice of brutish power
 Constrained a mother to destroy her child ;
 I call for vengeance for his precious blood,
 For retribution upon thee and Rome,
 Through hundreds, thousands of the years to come,
 That so her children may through ages curse
 This hour and thee !

CALIG. Fool ! Call howe'er you will,
 The gods, they hear you not—

THUSN.

Yea, they do hear !

Voices I hear far off around me float,
 And forms I see that glimmer through the mist.
 A roar as of thunder when billows run high,
 And nations on nations come marching by ;
 The ramparts crash down, the walls are laid low,
 The heavens are aflame, the streams ruddy with gore ;
 They come to chastise, they come to avenge,
 And the glory of Rome, bloody Rome is no more !
 Ho, victory, victory ! hark, the acclaim !
 From tongues that Germania moulded it came !
 Ho, victory won by Germania's glaives !
 The German spirit, I see it soar
 From sea to sea, and from shore to shore !
 Yes, ye gods of home, we no more are slaves !
 And I see our oppressors in dust laid low
 In vengeance for ages of bondage and woe,
 Grovelling at our feet in pain,
 Crying aloud for grace in vain,
 Arming themselves in vain !—

CALIG. Hence with the raving beldame ! Drag her hence !
 Why do you stand there stricken dumb and pale ?
 She lies, her words are false—

THUSN.

My words are true,

Sacred and solemn, as they are my last !

(Stabs herself in the breast with the sword.)

As true as—that thy fetters, Rome, are burst—

And my free spirit freely seeks its home !

(Sinks down on the couch and dies.)

CALIG. She gone as well ! *(To CÆSONIA.)* Look, though its
 light is fled,

Her eye still threatens ! 'Twas the very way
 The old man looked ! Oh, cover up the bodies !

(Slaves spread the green coverlet over them.)

Outwitted by a woman ! Never, never !

No ! To despite you I will have my show !
 Where's he that has the charge of it, the Ædile,
 That managed matters here so vilely ? Where

Is Flavius Arminius? As these
 Have slipped my grasp, their kinsman shall be flung
 To my pet puppies, the Hyrcanian lions.
 Up! fetch me Flavius Arminius straight!
 CASS. Quick! seek him out!

Enter CORNELIUS.

CORN. You seek in vain!

CALIG. In vain?

Wherefore in vain?

CORN. For Flavius Arminius,
 Maddened by self-reproach, or craven fear,
 I know not which, has fallen upon his sword;
 He was ashamed to live, he said, since by
 His mother's hand his nephew had been slain!

CALIG. Dead, dead! He also dead! And you stood by
 Faint-hearted curs, and did not hold his hands?
 Oh, how I wish that all the Roman people
 Had but one head! I'd know then what to do.
 My festival, my games, I mean to have—
 I will see blood, hear the death-rattle! Ay,
 Some Jews, niethinks, were recently brought in,
 Men of the sect that they call Christians;
 Let these then have a romp with my pet whelps!
 Up! Range yourselves in order! Music! music!
 A music meet for Cæsar's festival!

(Music begins.)

To the Circus! Up, and raise triumphal shouts!
 For I am victor, victor I will be!
 Cry "Hail, hail, Cæsar! hail, Germanicus!"

GENERAL CRY. Hail, Caius Cæsar! hail, Germanicus!

(Exit CALIGULA with CÆSONIA and the rest.

*CASSIUS seizes CORNELIUS by the hand,
 and leads him to the front of the stage.)*

CASS. You see, time hurries on! 'Tis he or we!
 Who e'er lived safely in a tiger's den?
 Know you how the Prætorians stand disposed?

CORN. They are for us.

CASS. So is the Senate too.

CORN. Then, when do you suppose—

CASS. To-morrow !

CORN. Good !

To-morrow let it be ! *(Curtain falls.)*

THE END.



